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- THE DRUMMERS OF JAMES BROWN

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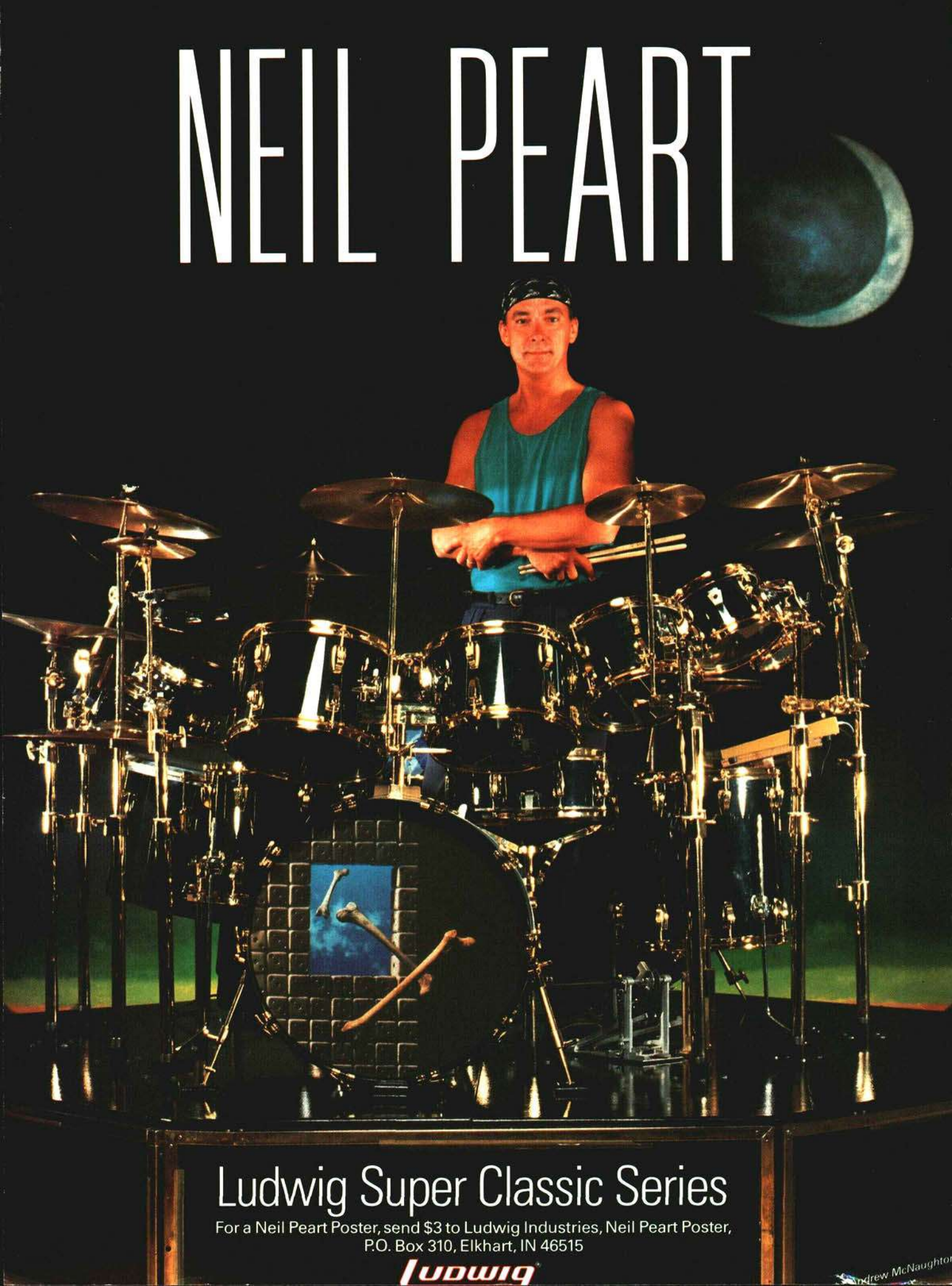
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VOLUME 16, NUMBER 4

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FEATURES

MIKE BORDIN

Faith No More's unique synthesis of rap, metal, and punk set them apart from the crowd early on. And Mike Bordin's relentless drumming has been a key ingredient from the start. In this special story, Bordin sets the stage for the band's latest sensory assault, and traces the path that lead there.

• *by Robin Tolleson*

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MILTON SLEDGE

While albums like *Ropin' The Wind* have made Garth Brooks country music's biggest sensation in years, Brooks drummer Milton Sledge has been ropin' some major attention himself. Here Sledge discusses how he makes it happen in the studio with Brooks, Kathy Mattea, Alabama, and other country stars.

• *by Robyn Flans*

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THE DRUMMERS OF JAMES BROWN

One reason James Brown's music is the funkiest known to man is his choice in drummers—simply some of the most grooving men who ever sat behind a kit. In this special MD story, we trace the careers and contributions of the three funkiest JB drummers. Plus: transcriptions of classic JB drum grooves.

• by *Adam J. Budofsky and Harry Weinger*

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GETTING REPLACED IN THE STUDIO

Sure, when it happens, you think you're the only one who knows how bad it feels. In this unique story, though, session greats Andy Newmark, Jeff Porcaro, Jim Keltner, Kenny Aronoff, and Hal Blaine discuss how they've dealt with rejection, and then turned it into education.

• *by Rick Mattingly*

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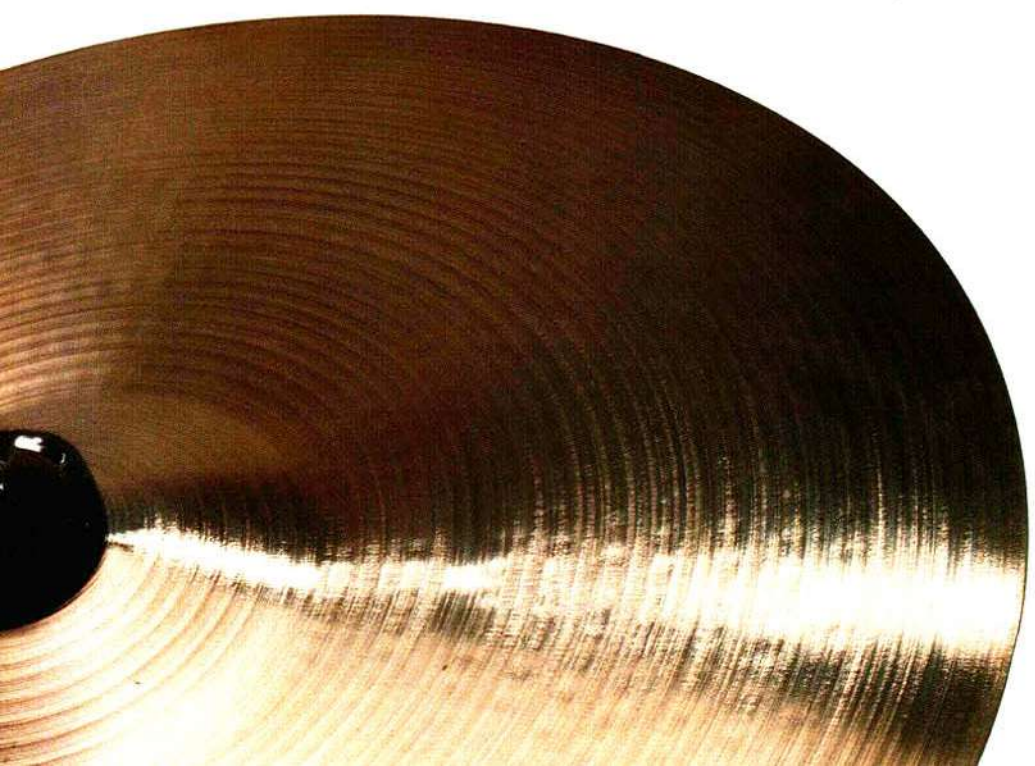

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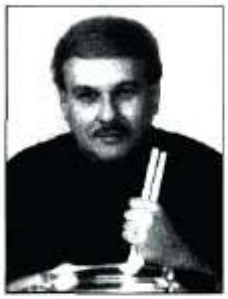
EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

MD's Supergal



Over the years I've thanked many people who've played an essential role in the success of *Modern Drummer*. Contributing writers, photographers, artists, Advisory Board members, and certain industry people have all been praised. However, it recently occurred to me that I've been remiss not to make special mention of one particular person who has been incredibly important to *MD* on a day-to-day basis for a long time. I'm referring to *MD's* office manager, Tracy Kearns, our own in-house *Supergal* who's given more than her fair share of devotion to *Modern Drummer* over the past eight years.

Starting out with the magazine as a part-timer, "T" (a nickname I somehow initiated) worked her way up through the ranks of the circulation department, quickly absorbed enough about our business to become assistant office manager several years later, and was promoted to head office manager four years ago.

Tracy is what some busy executives call their gal Friday, or right-arm person. A person you can count on so many times in any given week that you sometimes foolishly take their contribution for granted. The kind of person whose importance squarely hits home when they're out for a day or two, and suddenly you notice that something *very* important in your daily business life is missing.

To fully describe her work day, and list all the challenges our Supergal confronts every day, could take up another full page. Suffice to say that besides my associate publisher wife, Isabel, to whom she also directly reports, "T" is next in line in the *MD* hierarchy, and there's hardly a single aspect *of Modern Drummer* that in one way or another does not pass across her busy desk.

Though "office manager" would indicate someone in charge of inter-office activity only, our Supergal's role actually extends well beyond that. Carefully watching over production schedules, monitoring the complexities of *MD's* worldwide distribution, and overseeing finances are just a few of her responsibilities. Brought in on most major decisions and policy changes, she's often required to move a "rush" job through in two days, or to research *any* possible area of company operations and have it on my desk at a moment's notice. It's your classic pressure cooker gig, and I doubt whether *MD* would function as smoothly as it does without her.

I'm certain there isn't an executive in the world who wouldn't give their own right arm for a manager like Tracy. I hope they're all as lucky as I've been. All I know is, I feel pretty fortunate that this particular Supergal belongs to *us*.

RS

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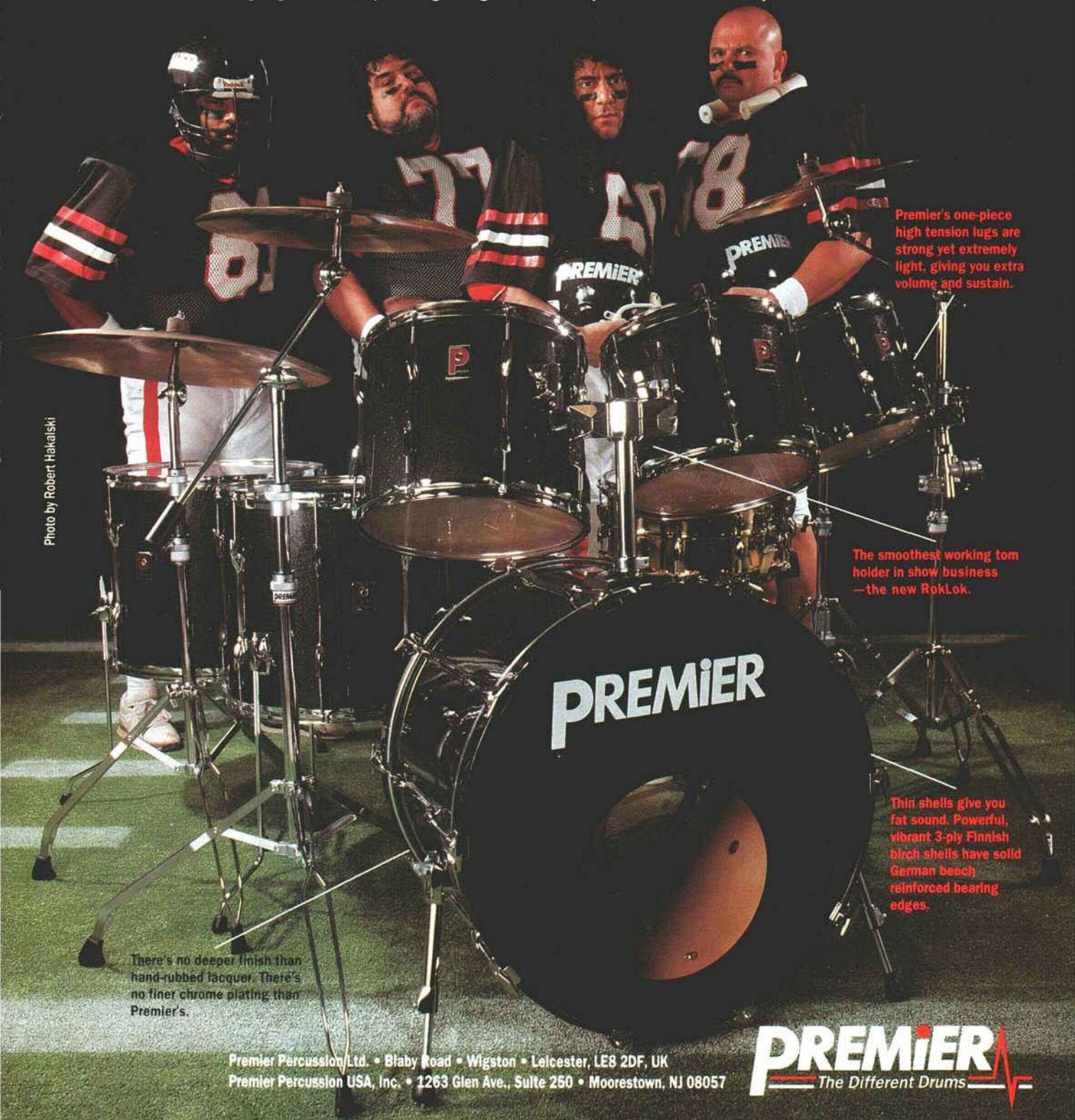

Photo by Robert Hakalski

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PREMIER
The Different Drums

Mark Brzezicki

I am writing in regards to the interview with Mark Brzezicki in your January issue. I feel I must thank you for it, because it has been long overdue and I have been waiting for it forever. Brzezicki is, to say the least, incredible. Along with many others, I have followed him and his drumming throughout the Big Country days (although I'm sure he doesn't want to be labeled as Big Country's ex-drummer) and will continue to do so. His attitude and outlook are inspirational. Thanks, Mark!

Johnny Wall
Durham NC

We Got The Beat

There was a time when timekeeping was measured by our inner clocks and the ears of our fellow players...when "laying down time" meant swinging—not negotiating your 16th notes with a machine... when the front line expected a steady tempo, but with a little pushme-pullyou to create and resolve tension, and enough accents, fills, and other variations to keep the rhythm fresh and interesting.

Technology-bashing is bad, but carrying technology to illogical conclusions is even worse. What we have now, according to Jeannine Davis in the January '92 *Readers' Platform,* is the *Russian Dragon*—a machine that not only helps drummers to keep a steady beat, but reveals if they "may still be drifting from the click"—measured in *milliseconds,* no less—and displayed so that "all the other band members can see the result." In an ad in the same issue, we learn that the *Beat Bug* rejects a click in favor of a digital display "of *your* tempo with large, easy-to-read LEDs." Are you really a silly millisecond off, like the bass player says? Settle those arguments scientifically, by looking at the display. (Are we having fun yet?)

From the beginner to the cutting-edge professional, we all need to mind the tempo. But even the greatest drummers have rushed or dragged the tempo (often on record), in part because they were risk-takers who refused to "play like a machine"—a phrase that *used* to be a put-down. Nowadays we have the ultimate in fail-safe rhythm: the wholly programmed drum part (the percussive equivalent of a dildo; live players need not apply).

This is a Pentagon, hypermedical, Rube Goldberg view of technology: "If a complex device *can* be made, go ahead and make it." I think it's time to pull the plug, not on all electronic equipment, but on conceptions of musical growth that value order and predictability over flexibility and invention.

Charlie Suhor
Savoy IL

Where's Richie?

I am trying to locate an artisan named Richie Selmer, maker of traditional Zimbabwean/Shona-style mbiras (sometimes referred to as "kalimbas"). I am the lucky owner of one of Richie's spectacular instruments and would like to consult him about it. The last time I heard of his whereabouts, he was living in Alabama, but I have no further information.

Could you please print this request on your letters page? Perhaps someone out there will be able to point me in Richie's direction. I'd also enjoy hearing from anyone else who enjoys playing and collecting mbiras/kalimbas. Finally, thank you for being there, *MD,* on behalf of the obsessed percussaholics of the world. You folks never fail to entertain, educate, and inspire.

Beverly Louise Slayton
Cambridge MA

Training After High School

In preparing and helping high school students select a college for their particular interest, I found Robert Breithaupt's article "Training After High School" [December '91 MD] to be very helpful. Students should ask themselves the very questions that were discussed. Drummers/percussionists especially should be advised to know basic piano and/or mallet theory *before* entering college. Also, for certain degrees/careers in music technology, analytical subjects such as math and science will be important. If available at their high school, students would also benefit from business classes and training on computers. Even good communication skills will be called upon in many music careers.

Students today have access to a wealth of technology that they may apply to the music classroom setting in order to be well-prepared for a career in music. I instruct my percussion students not only musically, but also in how to function in the music industry—giving them vital tools to be applied. I hope *MD* readers will put your article's valuable information to good use.

Gregg Martin
Alumni Representative-
Berklee College of Music
Evansville IN

The Italian Connection

I wish to thank you for sending me your *Modern Drummer* magazine for all these years. *MD* has helped me so much in my career as a professional drummer. It has inspired me in all the other works I do—and to share my love for drums with all the rest of the drummers in the world. If I could be of any help to you here in Italy, just let me know. Keep up the very, very, good work, people. Ciao!

Paolo Sburlati
Torino, Italy

Vic Firth Rocks with

Neil Ziozower

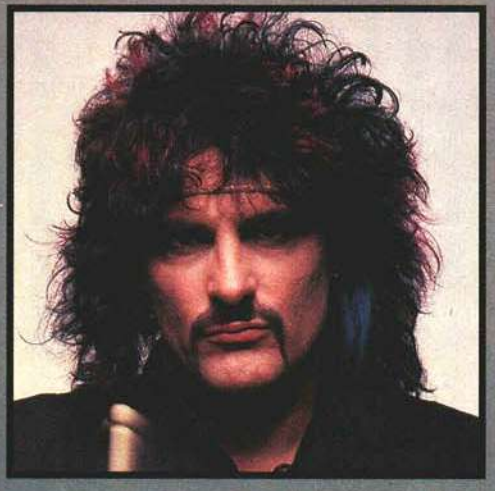
Gregg Bissonette Signature Stick

Gregg Bissonette is known as a truly multi-talented artist. This hickory model was designed by Gregg and Vic to be the perfect "cross-over" stick: ideal for rock drummers and fusion drummers alike. The stick is a beefed-up 2B, featuring a heavy shoulder and neck. Overall length: 16¼".

Tommy Lee Signature Stick

Tommy Lee - the powerhouse behind Mötley Crüe. His new signature stick is an extra long Rock - for the added reach demanded by so many drummers. The hickory stick features a red nylon tip to match Tommy's red signature. Overall length: 17".

William Hames



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Max Weinberg

Two years ago Bruce Springsteen told members of the E Street Band that he wanted to make his next album without their help. That left E Street Band drummer Max Weinberg unemployed—but only temporarily.

Weinberg used his new-found freedom wisely. In addition to rereleasing his book, *The Big Beat,* Weinberg also formed his own record label, Hard Ticket Entertainment; joined the New Jersey-based rhythm & blues band, Killer Joe; produced his first album, Killer Joe's *Scene Of The Crime;* and played drums on Southside Johnny's newest album, *Better Days.*

"It's been a matter of using my time to do things I've always wanted to do," says Weinberg. "Being with Bruce for all the years I was with him meant not having the time to explore other ideas and projects. But now I have the time, and I'm taking advantage of it."

Weinberg's pet project has been Killer Joe, which, according to Weinberg, isn't a band in the traditional sense. "Actually, it's [keyboard player and long-time friend] Joe Delia and me and whatever musical flights of fancy we take together. We don't plan to tour, and we may or may not do future albums together. But I'm real proud of this record. The music we picked really made me stretch as a drummer. We picked swing tunes and rhythm & blues things that reflect the kinds of music we grew up with. The album was made with the idea that you could put it on at a party and just let it play from start to finish."

According to Southside Johnny, "I think *Better Days* contains the best drumming I've ever heard from Max. He heard the songs and knew exactly what they needed in terms of the drums. He is responsible for a big chunk of any success the album might enjoy."

Is there a chance Weinberg might one day work again with Bruce Springsteen? "Anything is possible," says Weinberg. "But truthfully, I don't know. I do know that working with him has always been lots of fun. I guess we'll just have to wait and see what happens."

• *Robert Santelli*

Russ McKinnon

While Tower of Power is preparing a new album, Russ McKinnon recalls that the last one, *Monster On A Leash*—the band's first in six years—was one of the most enjoyable experiences he's had with the group. "It was great to really get in the trenches and try to pull things together for a new CD," says McKinnon. "Everyone had equal say. If I said, 'I don't like this groove—let's play it straight and shuffle the chorus,' then we tried it. Anything goes in Tower of Power, because it's such a unique band. You can get away with what I think is a little more musicality than most.

"Rocco [Prestia]would come in with a bass line, I'd put a drum groove to it, and we'd write a song to it," Russ continues, citing "Funk The Dumb Stuff" as an example. "That track was so spontaneous. I had fun with that because I got to shift stuff around a little bit. Then there's the tune 'Miss Trouble,' where I used two different snare drums. It has a straight kind of funky groove in the verse, and then a big drum fill, and then a shuffle in the chorus."

McKinnon says that the band spent a lot of time on the songs in rehearsal, so, "Once we went into the studio, I did 14 drum tracks in three days. Things were pretty much first takes, like the instrumental, 'Mr. Toad's Wild Ride.' There *are* things on the CD that, if we had a budget that allowed more time, I would have liked to redo. But you know what? If you listen to that old Motown stuff, there's nothing that feels better. All that matters is, 'Does it groove, or not?'"

• *Robyn Flans*

Herman Mathews

Last year Herman Mathews worked on the late-night TV show *Into The Night,* as well as with Kenny Loggins, a gig he's had for the past couple of years. "The night Kenny gave me a call," Mathews says, "you can imagine how the conversation went: 'Herman, this is Kenny Loggins.' 'Sure, right!" He asked me to audition, so I went down and played. With auditions, I kind of make up my mind to have a good time. I carried my own drums, while everyone else came with cartage. This was before I knew what this whole thing was about.

"I had heard Chester Thompson's audition," Herman recalls, "and I was wondering why he was playing so soft. When I got in the room, I saw why. Kenny was sitting right in front of the drums. So I said, 'Kenny, you might want to back up a little bit.' He moved back a couple of feet, and I said, 'No, no Kenny, you don't understand.'

"We had a good time," Mathews continues. "I was in there for about an hour, and it was great. We were playing songs I grew up with. i,

"Kenny thinks drums," Mathews says. "I'm not saying he writes from the drums, but Kenny is very knowledgeable about drumming and rhythms, so it's always a challenge to go in and give him what he wants. It's fun. I've never worked with anyone who has had that kind of insight."

• *Robyn Flans*

Rich Wright

Seven of the tracks on Tattoo Rodeo's critically acclaimed debut LP were actually part of the original batch the group recorded independently before Atlantic ever signed them. "We got a spec deal at a studio," explains drummer Rich Wright, "and we were able to pay that back once we got involved with Atlantic. We did ten songs, and it got us management and really started abuzz."

Wright describes the band as a bluesy, straight-ahead rock band. "We hit a wide spectrum," he says. "We love to go out there and kick butt as far as playing heavy, going from 'Shotgun Johnny' to 'Sweet Little Vicky' to 'Been Your Fool' and 'Let Me Be The One.' The first two are a heavier groove with big drums and big guitars. Then I love 'Let Me Be The One' because my experience with it was truly unique. It's almost like listening to something you've heard before by the Band or some old rock 'n' roll.

"When we did that song," Rich continues, "the record was finished, but we were still in the studio. My drums just happened to still be set up, and the rest of the guys were playing and singing this thing with the producer with acoustic guitars. I said, 'Man, what is that? Let me go out and play a beat,' and that beat ended up being 90% of the track. That's something I'm really proud of, and it ended up going on the record."

Tattoo Rodeo hit the road pretty hard following the release of their album last year. "Live, the band is real close to the record," Wright says. "We come alive, though. I go crazy. I put on a show."

• ***Robyn Flans***

Danny Cochran

"To me," says Danny Cochran, "playing a shuffle that's layin' in the pocket just right is like sitting in a real good rocking chair. I'm in heaven playing that style of music." Which is a good thing, as the Texas blues band Danny's with, Anson Funderburgh *Si* the Rockets, do a whole lot of shuffles.

The son of a trumpet player who was a member of the Texas Playboys, Danny got his start playing western swing. "That was a great background," Danny says, "because the grooves are very similar to what I'm doing with Anson. This gig has given me a lot of discipline. You can't play a lot of fills in this type of music; you have to concentrate on laying down very good time."

And Danny does just that on the band's recent album, *Tell Me What I Want To Hear,* on the Blacktop label. "We did the record in about four days," Cochran says. "Everything is either a first or second take. It went fast because we've been on the road together for two years, so we were very prepared." The album's title tune was written for *China Moon,* a movie due for early '92 release, in which Anson & the Rockets appear performing in a club.

The band stays on the road a lot, averaging 240 dates a year. "We're pretty strong through the Midwest and on the East Coast," Danny says, "and our last trip to California was real good. The best part of it is making new friends in the different towns we go to. I meet a lot of drummers, and it really is like a brotherhood. I always hear guitar players talk about trying to blow each other off the stage, but drummers have a close-knit family-type thing. If I were ever to quit playing, that's what I would miss the most."

• ***Rick Mattingly***

News,

Jimmy DeGrasso touring with Lita Ford.

Alvino Bennett on recent LPs by Brenda Russell and Carol Duboc.

Hunt Waugh on the road with The Questionnaires.

Darrell Dwarf on Killer Dwarf's new LP, *Method To The Madness.*

Wally Ingram on Timbuk 3's most recent album, *Big Shot In The Dark.* He's been on the road with them, as well as doing scattered dates with Jackson Browne.

Jim Blair on Tonio K cuts from a soundtrack for a Showtime special. Jim is also still working with Howard Hewett and Spencer Davis. And congratulations to Jim and his wife Kathryn on the birth of their son Wyatt.

Michael Blair on tour with Lou Reed.

William Calhoun on a record with Billy Vera and Nona Hendryx, the proceeds of which will go to the R&B Foundation. Will's also been working with Mick Murphy, with Marcus Miller, and in a trio with Vernon Reid and Melvin Gibbs.

Zoro is currently on a world tour with Lenny Kravitz.

Bob Dylan has purchased the movie rights to Mel Torme's critically acclaimed **Buddy Rich** biography, *Traps, The Drum Wonder.* Could a film be far behind?

Send quick, proven tips that have saved you time, money, or effort to Drumline, c/o Modern Drummer, 870 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Items can range from equipment maintenance, repair, or design tips to practice and playing ideas. Please keep tips to 150 words or less, and be sure to include your name and address. We will pay $15 for every tip we publish.

Quick Fix For Bearing Edges

I have a suggestion for locating and satisfactorily remedying imperfect bearing edges. While tuning, place a finger in the center of the head and tap (at an equal distance from the rim) all around the head. If a certain outer region of the head produces a lower tone than the rest of the head, apply additional tension to the nearest lug(s). If this does not solve the problem, press with your fingers on the suspected area to see if the head is in contact with the bearing edge. If the head does not produce the necessary seal with the drum, note the location on the edge of the shell and remove the head. Then, using transparent cellophane tape, build up the bearing edge through successive overlappings. After smoothly blending the tape to the level of the edge on both sides of the depression, replace the head and re-tune.

Although this technique is not permanent, it may be a worthwhile remedy for those who have neither the time nor the money to have their bearing edge professionally refinished. It may also be applied by working musicians and drum techs who need to make quick, temporary modifications to tune up troubled drums.

Clarence Hoover III
Easton PA

Non-Slip Cowbell Mounting

Does your cowbell slip or pivot from side to side on its mounting rod? Have you tried tightening it with a wrench? This can be very harmful to your cowbell and your hardware, too. Here's a simple tip that can stop this slippage: Wrap duct tape around the rod in a spiral manner, then mount the cowbell on top of the tape. The tape's thickness will hold the mounting screw in place. There may still be a negligible amount of movement, but even that will be no problem, because the cowbell will "bounce back" immediately.

Max Soong
Andover MA

Practice On The Melody

As drummers, because of the complexity and size of our instrument, we usually don't have the luxury of playing between rehearsals—unless the band plays in our home.

This problem inspired me with an idea to compensate for that limbo time. I get tapes of the material, sit down with my trusty practice pad, and play the melody of the music. I use paradiddles, flams, double or single strokes, and any other rudimental stickings that fit the tempo, catching all the stops and changes. Songs come easier at rehearsal, because I understand the melody line. This allows me to be more sympathetic (as we should be) to what the other musicians are playing. The same technique is ideal for a better understanding of foreign styles of music, such as Latin, Brazilian, or reggae—and it helps to keep my hands in shape, too!

S.R. Purdy
Pennsauken NJ

Developing The Left Foot

As the result of a skiing accident, I found a great exercise for strengthening a "lazy" left foot. Take a bucket with a handle (or an old paint can) and put some stones or cans of food inside for weight. Then sit on a high table or counter so that your feet dangle. Let the handle of the bucket rest on your foot just where your toes begin. Pivot your foot up and down, lifting the bucket as you do so. This exercise helped me to perfect double strokes on my left bass drum, and I still use it as a "chops-builder" before a gig. I hope it helps some others with their foot technique.

Tracy Mescha
Chicago IL

Shopping Hint

I visit drum stores often to look for used parts. When I do, I take the following helpful items, all attached to a key ring: a 3' tape measure, a drumkey, a standard 12-24 American thread lug screw, a 12-24 nut, a 12-24 lug screw washer, and a small pocket knife. With these items I can accurately size used shells, rims, and heads, and ensure that lug screws (or the inserts in lug casings) are the size I need. (This is important, since some metric sizes are too close for me to tell by eye alone.) I can thus be certain of part sizes and suitability, and I minimize inconveniencing busy store personnel.

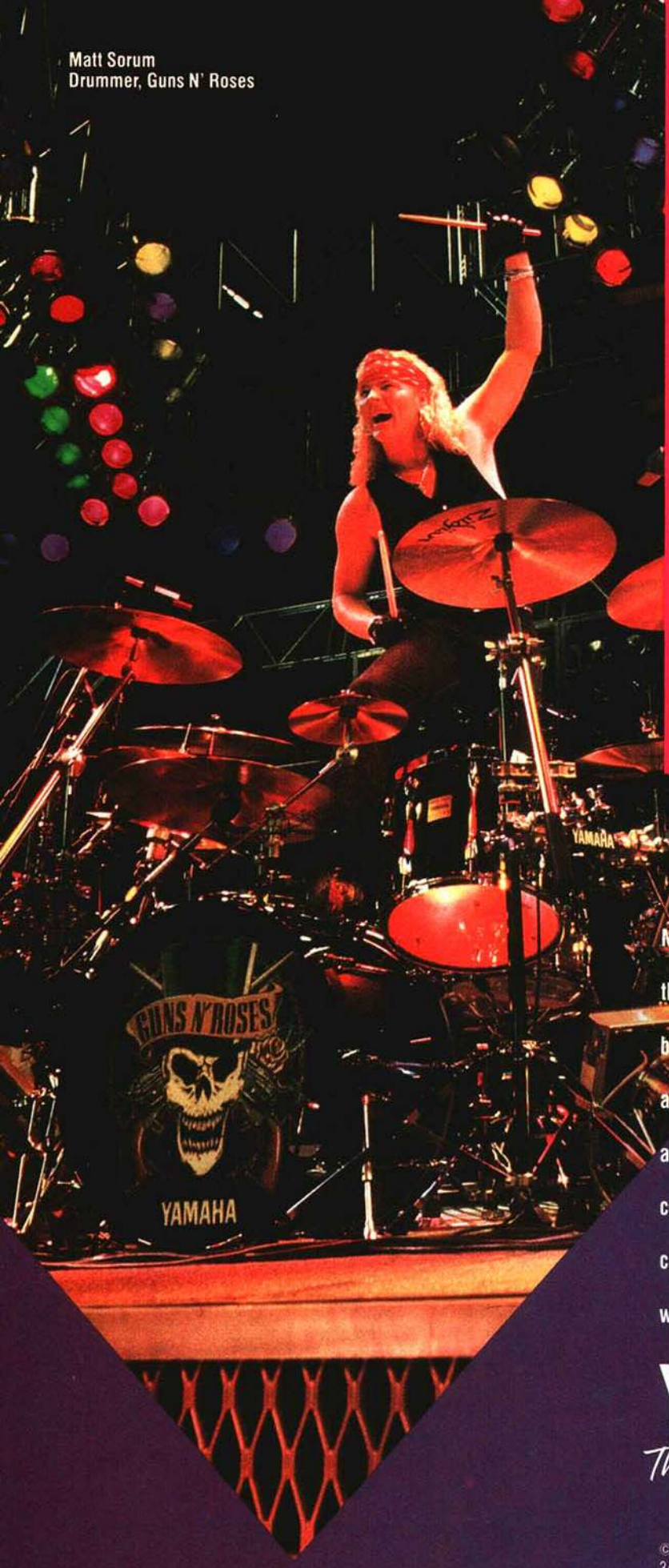
Michael Chadwell
Duluth GA

New Screws For Snare Strainers

How many times have you needed a screwdriver to adjust your snares? Slotted screws can easily strip out, and a screwdriver is an awkward tool to keep handy. I solved this problem by replacing all the adjusting screws on my snare with socket-headed cap screws (available at most hardware stores for a few cents each). Then I found an allen wrench that fit the cap screws. The allen wrench can easily be taped to the side of your drum or the snare stand. I own a 7x14 metal snare drum, and I've had no problem with the wrench taped to the shell.

Jason Conway
Morristown TN

Note: The tips presented in Drumline *are suggestions based on the personal experience of individual drummers, and are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by* Modern Drummer *magazine.* Modern Drummer *cannot guarantee that any problem will be solved by any* Drumline *suggestion, and cannot be responsible for any damage to equipment or personal injury resulting from the utilization of any such suggestion. Readers are encouraged to consider each suggestion carefully before attempting to utilize any* Drumline *tip.*



Matt Sorum
Drummer, Guns N' Roses

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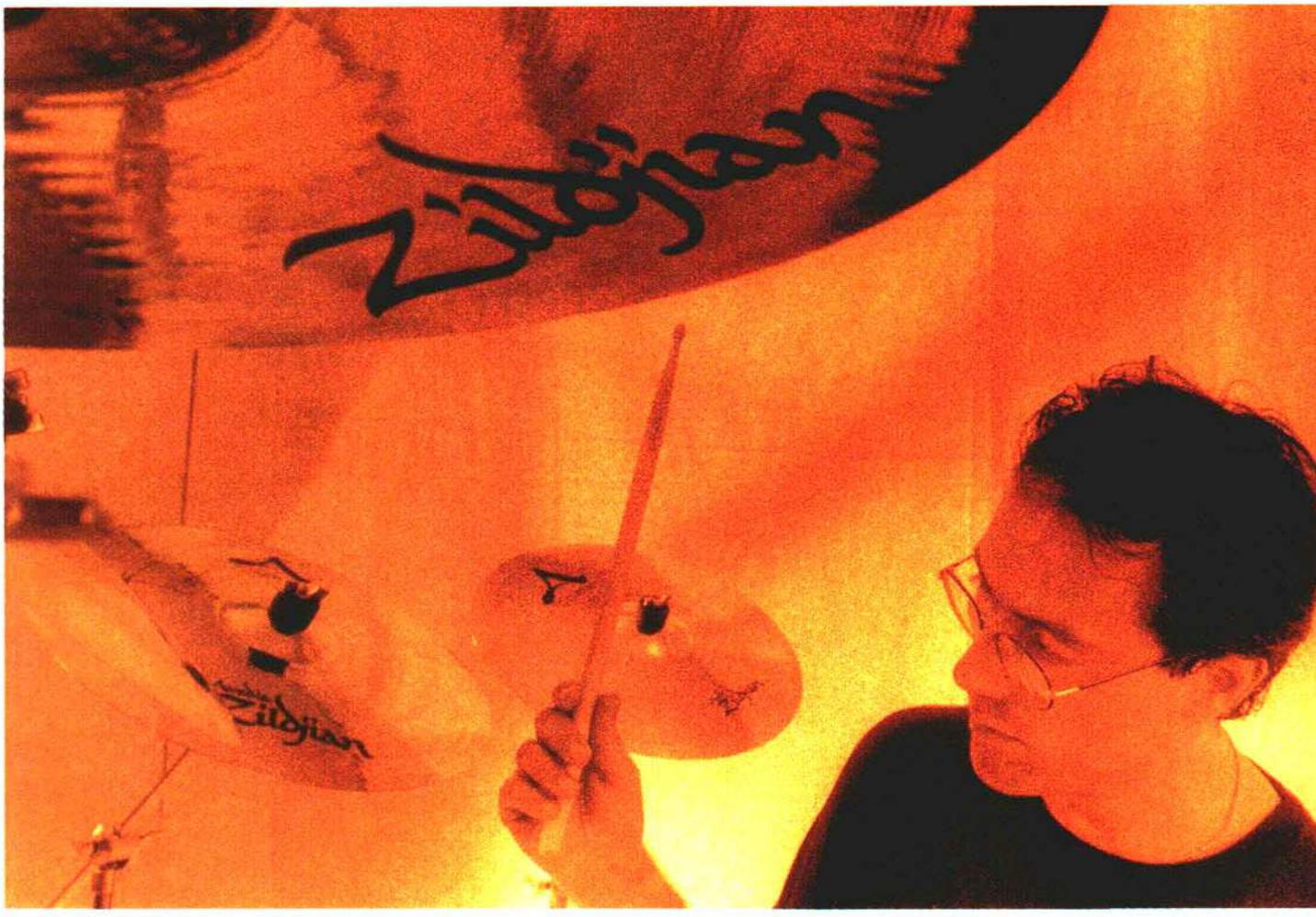

"ZILDJIAN TOOK THESE SO

Vinnie Colaiuta had a clear picture in his mind of what his dream cymbal would be. "It would have a 'sweet' sound," explained Vinnie. "Not too dark. Not too light. Sort of in-between, but not bland and not middle-of-the-road. It would be a thin cymbal with more spread than a thicker cymbal, but not too much more.

The A Custom.

When I hit the bell, it wouldn't go 'ching-ching' like a cash register. It would open up as soon as I touched it. I could even hit it with my finger and it would still sound good. It would speak to me. In a nutshell, the cymbal would be strongly reminiscent of the old Zildjian A, but with a more contemporary feel." Interestingly,

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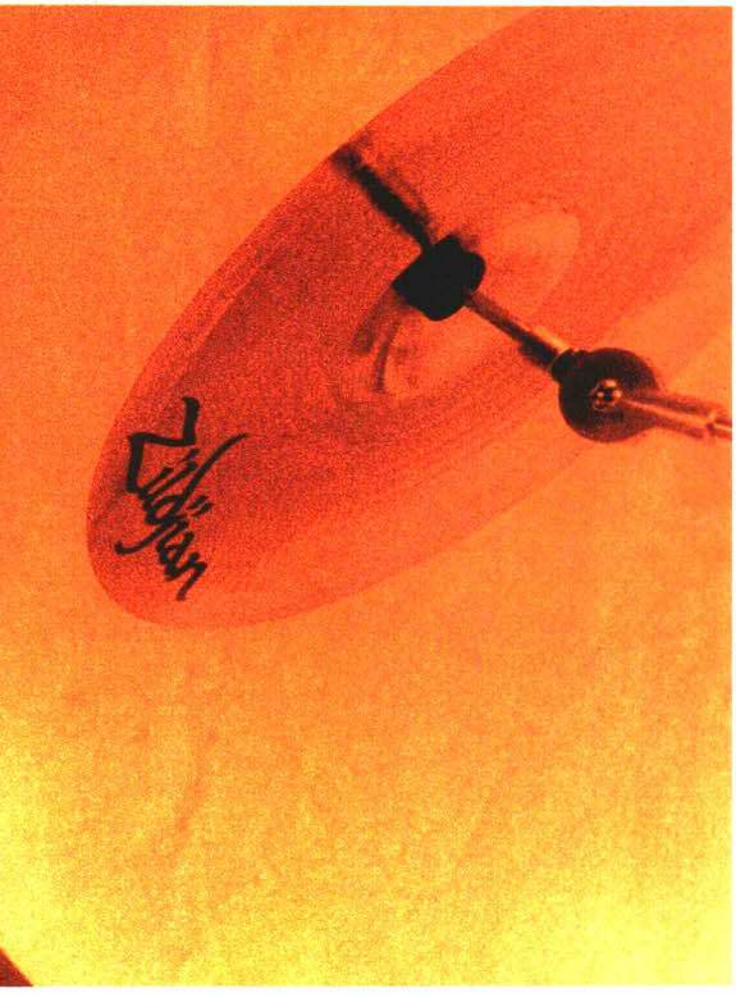

us field test. And after a lengthy process of playing, listening, and perfecting, we produced the new A Custom. We're thrilled with the cymbal because we believe it's the finest sounding A Cymbal we've made to date. And it should be. New computer techniques enabled us to analyze how minute variations in hammering patterns affected the sonics. And our exclusive rotary hammering device allowed us to create never-achieved-before nuances in sound. The A Custom is a complete range of cymbals with 14" Hi hats, 15," 16," 17" and 18" crashes, and

UNDS OUT OF MY HEAD."

several months prior to this discussion with Vinnie, we had already begun working on a cymbal with similar qualities, as an extension to the classic A Zildjian sound. We decided to join forces and create this new generation of cymbal together. We enlisted Dennis Chambers, Steve Smith, Neil Peart, William Calhoun and Omar Hakim, amongst others, to help

20" and 22" rides. To learn more about them, please write Zildjian at 22 Longwater Drive, Norwell, MA 02061. As a parting note, we'd like to thank all the artists involved in creating the A Custom. Especially Vinnie. Because when we sat down to work, his head was into it the most.

Zildjian®

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Alan White

Q I was ten years old when I first heard Yes. Since that time, I've been buying all your records. Now I'm 29 and finally got the chance to see you live at the Miami Arena this past summer. You and Bill Bruford were great! I'd like to know what type of Ludwig kit you were playing, and whether you were triggering it along with the acoustic sound. Also, why didn't you and Bill both play the intro fill for "Owner Of A Lonely Heart," considering that both of you great drummers were there on stage with all that wonderful equipment?

Orlando Schinini
Guatemala City, Guatemala

A It's a great pleasure to answer questions from someone who is interested in the detailed aspects of music, and is such a dedicated fan. The Ludwig kit I played on the 1991 American tour is of the *Super Classic* series. The shells were hand-picked at the factory and shipped to me in Los Angeles. I then had the kit custom-painted by Bill Detamore (Pork Pie Percussion) and fitted with May-EA internal microphones and triggers from Reek Havok (Drastik Plastik). Most of the drum sounds at the concert were purely acoustic, but some sections had electronic samples incorporated. One of those sections was the beginning of "Owner Of A Lonely Heart," which was acoustic drums with samples from the record added.

Working with Bill Bruford in a two-drummer setup within the framework of Yes was certainly a great experience, and I personally hope we will work together again. Several concerts were recorded live, so you may see an album and video of that tour come out in the near future.

Bun E. Carlos

Q Watching some old videos I have of Cheap Trick, I noticed you had to double the size of your drumkit when Tom Petersson left the band in the early '80s. Is it necessary to do that if you feel your band needs a stronger rhythm section but cannot get that extra sound from your bass player?

Also, from those same videos I noticed that you are able to switch the side that the hi-hat is on. Do you do this for reasons other than that you "just feel like switching" on any given day? How do you suggest I build up the coordination of my left hand so that I might be as flexible as you are?

Jessica Muse
Croton NJ

A Thanks for your letter, Jessica. Starting in August of 1980, for about 15 months we had a guitar player come in and learn Tom Petersson's bass parts for live performances. (For recording, Rick Nielson would play bass—because the guy really wasn't too good on bass.) I liked Keith Moon; I used to play double-bass in the '60s, and I kind of needed to fill in the bottom of the band, so that's why I expanded my kit to that huge 11-drum configuration. But then in 1982 we hired a real bass player named John Brandt, and I went back to a smaller kit.

To answer the second part of your question, I'm left-handed, but I play on a right-handed kit. I like to play "backwards" because it's a challenge and its good for my chops. I try to learn all my new licks forwards *and* backwards, but I lead most of my fills left-handed on the right-handed kit. The way I play is kind of a mess, but it works for me. I started doing it because I saw Dennis Wilson, of the Beach Boys, playing left-handed on a right-handed kit back in the '60s and it made sense to me.

For exercises, I simply warm up both hands evenly, and make a point to learn all my licks both left- and right-handed. That helps when I want to "mess around"—like switching the side of the kit I put the hi-hat on.

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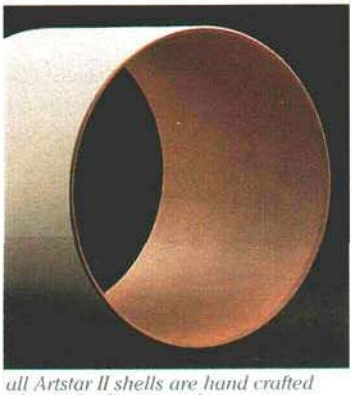

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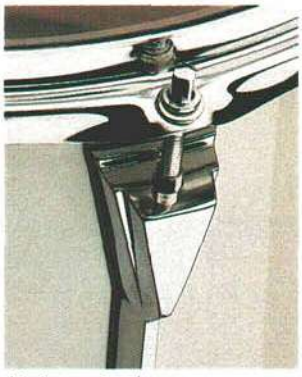

high tension lugs are shock mounted to isolate unwanted vibrations.

Simons's setup

IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Are Used Drums A Good Idea?

Q I recently read Rick Mattingly's article on "Buying Drums" in the October '91 *MD.* It was interesting how he said one should establish a relationship with the drum dealer at the local music store. I am a beginning drummer. I really enjoy my drum lessons, and I would like to know how to get the right set for me. I'd like Mr. Mattingly's opinion regarding what a good beginner set would be, and what I should be looking for in such a set. Also, should I buy new or used? Finally, if used drums are a good idea, should I buy them from a store or a private party?

Larry Cha
Herndon VA

A Rick Mattingly replies: "Since you mention that you are taking drum lessons, my first advice would be to ask your teacher for help in selecting the right drumset, since he knows you personally and would be better able to address your specific needs. But I will be happy to offer some general advice. Buying used drums can be a good way to buy a drumset that is of higher quality than a typical beginner kit, but still pay a lower price. However, you have to know what to look for in a used kit. There is no way a column such as this can educate you about how to evaluate used drums, so I would suggest that a beginner would be better off buying a used kit from an established music store. They will be just as concerned about developing a good relationship with you as if you were buying a new kit, because they will want your future business. You should be wary about buying from an individual (through classified ads, for example) unless you can have an experienced drummer (such as your teacher) check them out with you. In regards to new beginner sets, there are several good ones on the market, and again I would suggest that you seek advice from your teacher and the salesmen at the music store. If you impress upon them that you are serious about a continuing involvement with drumming, they will want to cultivate a long-term relationship with you and will, therefore, steer you in the right direction."

Are Small Hands A Problem?

Q I have pretty small hands. Despite my seven years of drumming experience, I feel this gives me a handicap when it comes to chops and rudiments. My question has two parts: First, *do* unusually small hands give me a disadvantage, or is this all in my head? Second, are there any accommodations that can be made for small hands, such as stick sizes or special techniques?

Kevin Boilesen
Lincoln NB

A Small hands are no particular handicap when it comes to drumming. Many very young players—who obviously have small hands—display excellent technique. It's more a matter of practice and development than it is one of hand size. As far as stick size goes, again the size of your stick should be a matter of what is comfortable for you. Young marching drummers often use "street model" sticks that are quite a bit larger than those used on drumsets, yet they accomplish strenuous rudimental stylings comfortably. If you actually feel more comfortable with a smaller stick, there's nothing wrong with that, either, and several stick models that are slightly smaller than average are available. If you can use sticks that are both short and small in diameter (depending on your musical requirements), there are *7A* and *MA* models from a number of drumstick companies. If you need a stick in a more standard diameter but quite a bit shorter than average, you might try the *Phil Collins* model from Pro-Mark, which is 14 3/4 long by 19/32" in diameter. Another option might be to use standard-size sticks in maple, which is quite a bit lighter than hickory. The lighter weight might make the sticks feel more comfortable.

What's The History Of Vistalite Drums?

Q I recently purchased a used set of Ludwig clear *Vistalite* drums. I was surprised that the snare was made of the same material (I had expected a metal snare), but it sounds great. Who came up with the idea for the clear drums? What are they made of? When did the drums first come on the market, and when was the last year they were made? And finally, in what colors were they available?

Mark Deem
Belpre OH

A William F. Ludwig, Jr. provided us with this brief history of Ludwig's *Vistalite* drums: "Clear drums, made of *Lucite* acrylic material, were originated by the Zickos Drum Co., of Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. William Zwicks was the inventor. In about 1970 or '71, we at Ludwig Drum Co. thought it a good enough idea to follow through with not only clear plexiglass models, but with a variety of other colors as well. This was the birth of *Vistalite* drums. We initially offered drums in blue, yellow, amber, red, black, smoky, green, and clear. In 1973 we expanded this into a multi-color range, through a gluing process. We learned to issue them in straight stripes as well as spirals. Our advertising literature led off with the slogan, 'Strike Up The Band!'

"The plexiglass provided great resonance; the shells were hard as a rock. As many people know, Led Zeppelin's John Bonham played a *Vistalite* kit for much of the band's career. However, in spite of our best efforts and promotions, these fine drums never really caught on in a big way. They were very fragile and needed careful attention during transport. Even so, the program proved profitable until the oil embargo of the early '70s drove the cost of oil and oil by-products (including plexiglass) through the roof. The line was discontinued by the mid-'70s."

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The final implements of this series, although seemingly small, are as significant as any other aspect of CZX Studio drums. The air vent is not hammered into the shell, it is hand set. This chromed zinc alloy grommet with synthetic seating gasket is easiliy the best in its class. The nameplate is manufactured of 100% aluminum and also features a synthetic seating gasket. It is affixed to the shell exterior by four high carbon steel screws. The same high carbon steel screws and washers used to secure the lugs.

The hardware pack available with pre-packaged CZX Studio drum sets includes 850W series cymbal stands, S950WS snare stand, H950 hi-hat stand, TH-95 tom holders, and the famous P880 single chain drive bass drum pedal.

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CZX Studio standard colors are #131 Midnight Quartz (shown above) and #133 Crimson Quartz. Other available colors include #103 Piano Black, #107 Coral Red, #108 Charcoal Grey, #109 Artic White, #110 Sequoia Red, #113 Sheer Blue, #114 Liquid Amber, # 116 Bordeaux Red and #117 Satin Beige.

mike bordin

By Robin Tolleson

Photos by Jay Blakesberg

definitely the real thing

"It's true," I urged the slightly startled voice on the other end of the phone. "They want you to be on the cover." "I'm a little surprised," he answered. "I've never done a drum solo, and I don't twirl my sticks." What 28-year-old Mike Bordin has done for the last seven years with drive and flair is patrol the vast rhythmic terrain explored by San Francisco rockers Faith No More. Since signing a record deal with Slash in 1985, FNM has brought punk, new wave, metal, fusion, and rap to the table, and Bordin, his waist-length dreadlocks flying, has proven to be one of the most adaptable and powerful drummers on the current scene.

When we spoke at the drummer's San Francisco south-of-Market Street apartment, Bordin and the band were working on the follow-up album to 1989's highly successful *The Real Thing.* The fellas had recently returned from a tour of South America and Japan, and Bordin's head was still spinning with visions—a boat trip 80 miles up the Amazon River, a samba school in Brazil, and performances in some very non-traditional stops such as Belem, Manaus, and Curitiba. "Everybody's a great drummer in Brazil, and that just jacks me up." Bordin says. "When everybody's clapping along with you at a gig, they're all clapping *with* you, really. The only problem was, when we got to Japan I spent all the money I'd made in Brazil on jazz records."

If you're looking for Bordin around town, don't try the favorite live music clubs or watering holes. You'd be better off prowling the stands at Candlestick Park during a Giants homestand. Or try the baseball card shops around the Bay Area, where he might be looking for a 1960 Topps Roberto Clemente, or a '62 Mays. Mike's been an avid sports fan since growing up across the San Francisco Bay in Hayward, just south of Oakland.

Bordin will venture out for a Neil Young or Guns N' Roses show, but he seems to have little appetite for the limelight aspect of his job. He appreciates the series of accolades that have come the group's way: *Spin* 1990 Artists Of The Year, *Rip* 1990 Readers' Poll Band Of The Year, Outstanding Group at the 1991 Bay Area Music Awards—where Bordin himself pocketed an Outstanding Drummer award. But Bordin's clearly in it for only one reason—he loves playing drums. He has steadily pursued his goals in drumming, never letting himself get into a rut. He enrolled in an African drumming class at one point to broaden his horizons, and that influence has remained strong in the composition of Faith No More's rhythmic patterns.

At press time, the band was still in what management calls the "pre-production" stage of recording, but the drummer *could* give this much of a hint about their upcoming release: "There are some smooth songs, some driving songs, some slow, real thudding songs, some really smoky cabaret, and some that sound like Faith No More—real heavy rhythm with the toms. It goes all over the place, as well it should." One other thing he could promise is no drum solo. "The solo escaped me. It's intimidating; it's just not for me. I hope I can do something that pushes the ensemble along, makes it more exciting. That's my job—to stoke the fire a little bit."

MB: The first gig I ever did, the very first thing that happened was that I hit the edge of the ride cymbal with my hand. You can still see the scar. Opened up a big flap of skin, blood squirting everywhere. Just off target, I guess. But most of the problems with the hands now just come from routine—from callouses opening up or from the butt of the stick hitting your leg.

RT: So even going back to pre-Faith No More days, you've always played pretty hard.

MB: Yeah, I try to play pretty much as hard as I can, except when it's not appropriate. My teacher taught me two things. One was to sit straight when you play. When you sit up straight you're using the spine as well as the weight of your anchor—which is your seat—to drive, to push into the drum. Then you have more strength back there. Sit straight, and don't play like Karen Carpenter. Hit 'em hard. Tony Williams, Art Blakey, John Bonham—you can go down the line. Vic Firth as a percussionist. And it's not just a rock, meathead phenomenon. Tony Williams plays a lot harder than a lot of meatheads. It's exciting to really hit 'em and get that explosive sound. I get into that.

RT: It's a matter of bringing the tone out of the drum.

MB: Exactly, especially when you're not blessed—or cursed—with a giant PA, soundman, and effects. If it's just you, playing at some small joint or even in practice, you are your own PA You've got to get over everybody else. In some ways that's half the battle. And I'm confident I can get over just about anybody, [laughs] I did for a long time. But it's like you say: You bring the tone out of the drum. You get different tones hitting it in the middle of the skin, or halfway in. Then it's different when you're hitting it as hard as you can in the middle of the skin, and a different tone again when you're hitting part of the rim and the skin as hard as you can. That drum over there [he points to a hand drum]—you could pick it up and get a million different tones out of it. There's as much as you want. That's what I love so much about the drums.

RT: When did you start playing?

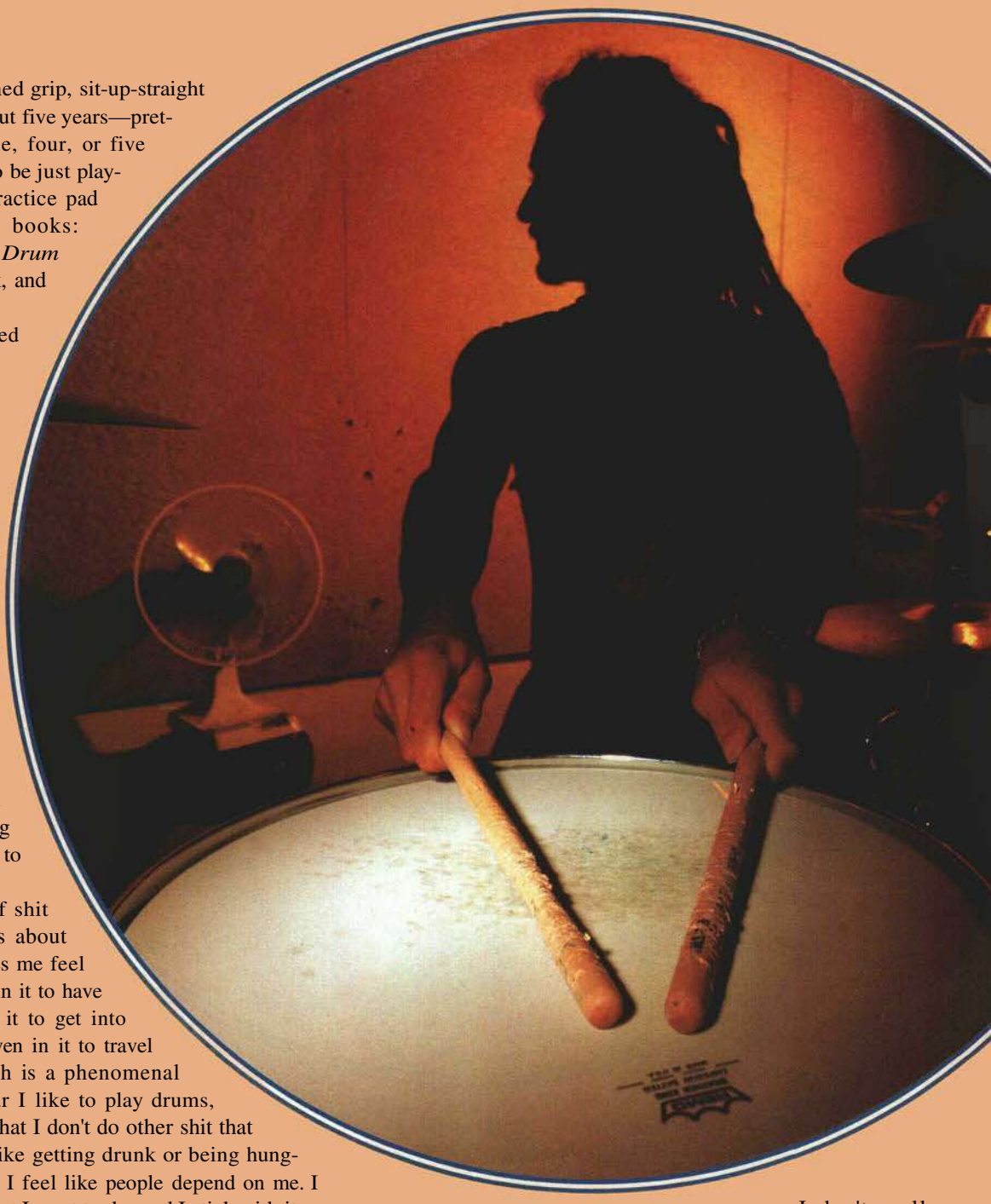
MB: When I was 13. The crazy thing is, I wasn't even particularly drawn to drums. As a kid I was into East Bay dirt-head rock music, and all my heroes were guitar players. Richie Blackmore...Tony Iommi was the guy... Michael Schenker was kind of huge at that time...Robin Trower, whoever. I had a friend who wanted to play bass, and I said, "Okay, I'll play drums." I really don't know why I said that.

RT: Why did you guys want to get a band together?

MB: He was obsessed by stuff like KISS at the time. Ever since I was nine or ten, all I ever wanted to do was listen to music. Music has always been there, even when my parents were making me dress up and torturing me with symphony and opera at a young age. Even when I couldn't remember school work, I could always remember the words to a song. One day in fifth grade, I was sick, and they brought the radio into my room. I turned it on, and the radio never left my room after that. For me it's therapeutic, but I have no idea why I really started playing. Probably because I'm not patient enough to learn how to play the guitar.

RT: When you did decide to get into it, did you pursue it seriously?

MB: Absolutely. I was doing stuff that I really shouldn't have done back then, getting into trouble. It was nothing for these days, but it wasn't so good. It made for some static. So I stopped doing everything that I shouldn't have done, and I started taking lessons once, sometimes twice a week for a half an hour. And between lessons, for the first couple of years, I would just practice putting the stick on the pad. I'm left-handed, and I was an experiment. It was the Chuck Brown technique taught by one of his farm students named



Jim Eaton. It's the matched grip, sit-up-straight thing. That was it for about five years—pretty much every day, three, four, or five hours a day. And it got to be just playing with records on a practice pad set. I've still got the books: Podemski's *Snare Drum Method,* a Vic Firth book, and a Charles Gallen book.

RT: Basically you worked on getting a good stroke?

MB: Well, like I said, I couldn't go straight over the top with both hands, like "bounce, bounce, release, pick up." I couldn't do it with my right hand for some reason. So I took lessons and really worked at it to get it started from the very beginning. I liked it. I found out it was something I could deal with.

RT: At the Bammies last year you said drumming was all you ever wanted to do.

MB: I've caught a lot of shit from the band members about that, but it's true. It makes me feel good, you know. I'm not in it to have a social life, I'm not in it to get into clubs for free. I'm not even in it to travel and see the world, which is a phenomenal bonus. When I'm on tour I like to play drums, and I like to make sure that I don't do other shit that gets in the way of that, like getting drunk or being hungover, or being tired even. I feel like people depend on me. I depend on me. That's what I want to do, and I stick with it.

RT: What kind of music did your teacher like to listen to?

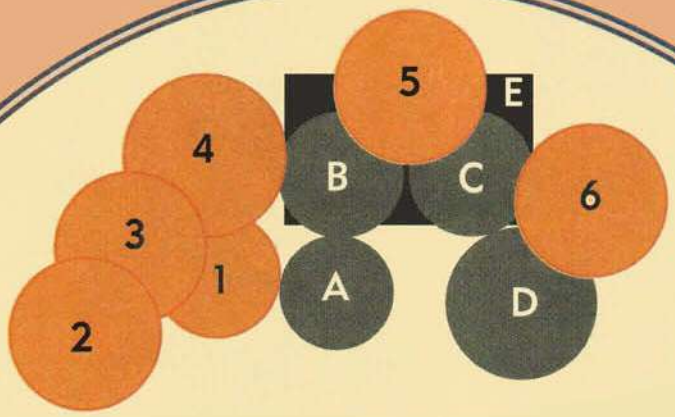
MB: He was into progressive stuff. Steve Gadd was just coming up, and had played on a Chick Corea record, *Leprechaun.* That was a little intimidating for me. Looking back, I started getting really frustrated with that. But he turned me on to Tony Williams, who to this day I think is phenomenal. He just did a clinic in Redwood City, and I got to say five words to him. It blew me away, because I really like Art Blakey, and at this clinic Tony said his favorite drummers were Max Roach and Art Blakey. I thought that was beautiful.

RT: So if the fusion stuff got frustrating for you, what music were you getting into?

MB: Roxy Music's *Stranded* was one of the first records I ever played to. It's a wonderful record, with Paul Thompson on drums—great drummer. It's got a mix of everything on it. I don't really remember what else I played to. After a while it was more playing with Cliff or some other guitar players, or jamming with people. We jammed as much as we could.

I did a three-month period playing stuff like Rush and Mahavishnu Orchestra, then started getting frustrated with the "chops" thing, and even rock music. And after that, lo and behold, I think punk and new wave came right in the door, and that was much rawer. I saw the Sex Pistols here. There were a lot of good shows around that time. That music was obviously stripped down. When everything else was collapsing under its own weight—too much pomp and circumstance—that stuff was just like a double espresso. So it started getting rawer like that—the Stranglers, Killing Joke, and Public Image.

RT: So despite the fact that you didn't go for the licks-con-



Drumset: Yamaha *Recording Custom* in black finish
A. *6 1/2* x 14 maple snare
B. 13x15 rack tom
C. 14 x 16 rack tom
D. 16x18 floor tom
E. 14x26 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 15" New Beat hi-hats (older model, yet sturdy!)
2. 19" K China Boy
3. 18" K crash/ride
4. 21" Z light Power ride
5. 19" K dark crash
6. 18" K medium crash

Hardware: Yamaha, including their rack system. Bass drum pedal is a strap-drive Drum Workshop model.

Heads: Remo coated *Pinstripe* on top of snare, coated *Emperors* on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors on bottoms. Clear *Pinstripe* on bass drum batter head, with painted head on front.

Sticks: Vic Firth *Rock* model, played with butt end. The sticks are shaved about half way up the shaft for better grip (and splinters).

bordin's kit

scious approach, you didn't stop studying the instrument or trying to progress.

MB: Never. But when I went through my Camco drums/Billy Cobham period of setting up all these drums, I finally realized, "If you can't play three drums, how the hell are you gonna play fifteen drums? Try to learn and do something good with what you've got." I didn't have very good meter, I was pretty unsteady—same problems as anybody. But through everything, no matter what music it was, I was always playing.

RT: When did the African influence come into your playing?

MB: That started in a class at U.C. Berkeley, with a teacher named C.K. Ladzepko. It's an African drumming ensemble class for jocks, yuppies, frat boys, people who want to sleep in class—whatever they wanted out of it, they could get. I went there and started listening, and it was like a revelation—seeing this man making these incredible sounds. C.K. is a wiry, little man who can get these beautiful, loud sounds out of drums. I hope it doesn't sound insulting to him, but that's real primitive, playing real hand drums. If you're looking to strip it down, that is a good place to start. And to hear C.K. talk about things like rhythms in Ghana—it's like the religion there, it's everything. And in terms of the earth and the four main beats—every beat is down, always toward the earth, whether it's implied or stressed—for me to hear that at 18 or 19, it was like, "That's *great."* And then to just see how it works. At that point I started getting off of just playing kick-snare-hat. Charlie Watts does that better than anybody—let *him* do it. I just started thinking about it, putting a little more drive in it. If you're going to really make it emotional, not just sort of an after-thought, then do something, or don't do it.

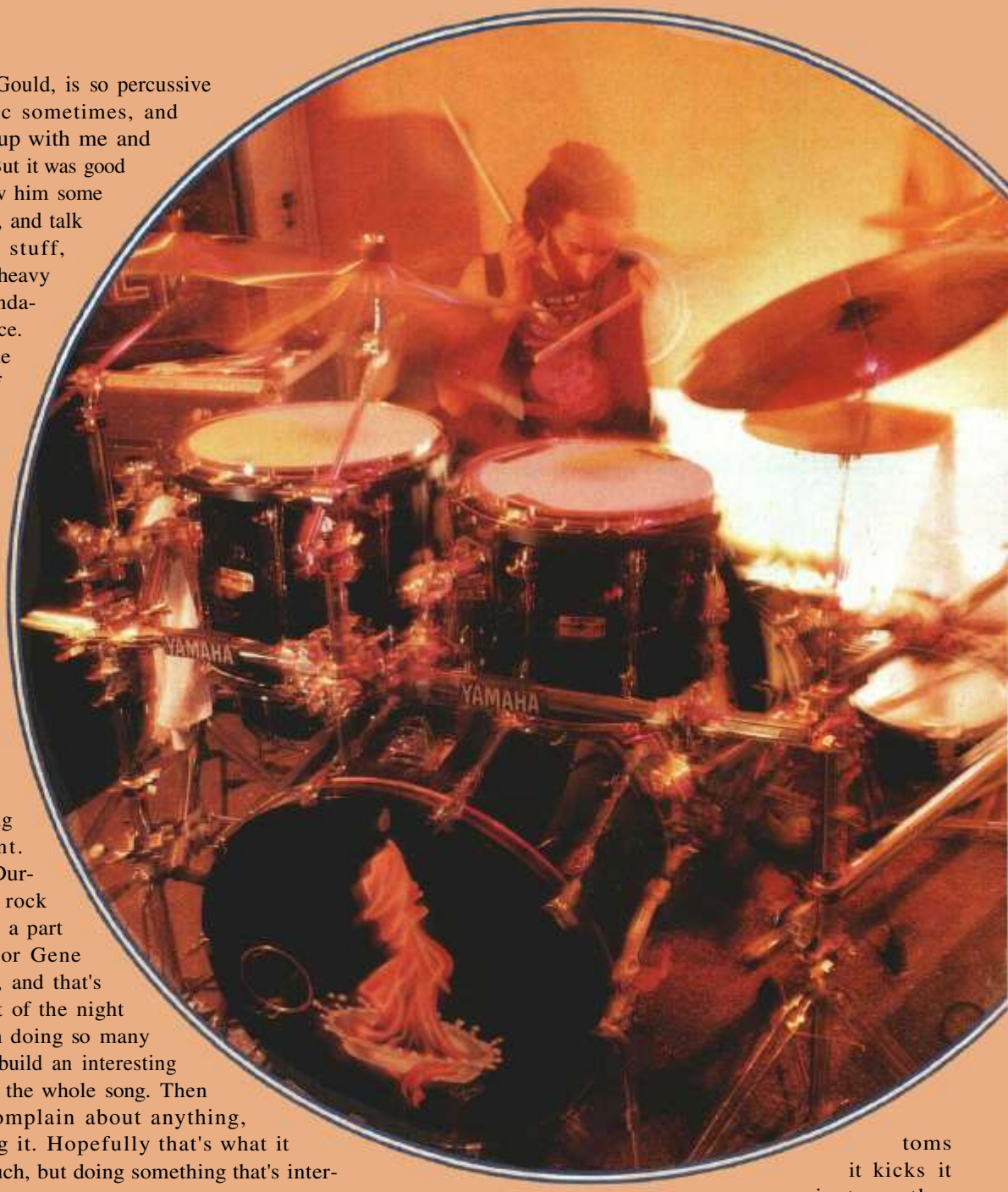
RT: I can see that in your playing. You don't do some of the usual things that are almost expected.

MB: I hope so. Everybody wants to be appropriate, though.

faith in eight

Though Mike says there are hundreds of albums he would put on a list of his "most inspiring," here are eight of the ones he says he listens to the most.

Album Title		Drummer	
Orgy In Rhythm	Art Blakey	Art Blakey	Blue Note 1554/1555
South Of Heaven	Slayer	Dave Lombardo	Def American 24203-2
Sun, Moon & Herbs	Dr. John	Fred Staehle	Atco AMC4232
"Incrivel Bateria"	Marcal	Marcal	Polygram 835-123-2
any	Neil Young		
Money Jungle	Ellington/Mingus	Max Roach	Blue Note 46398
Physical Graffiti	Led Zeppelin	John Bonham	Swan Song 55700-2
Stranded	Roxy Music	Paul Thompson	EG/Reprise 26041-2



Our bass player, Bill Gould, is so percussive and counter-rhythmic sometimes, and then he also latches up with me and makes it really drive. But it was good that I was able to show him some of the things I learned, and talk to him about this stuff, because now that's a heavy part of the band's foundation and a real solid force. You can't underestimate the rhythm section, if it's tight and has been together for a long time. It expanded our minds a little bit, and gave us a side door. You know, rock, punk, pop—there's another door, and it's the great escape from cheese or whatever.

RT: You're speaking of the African approach.

MB: Yeah, just learning something different. This isn't all there is. During their solos, some rock drummers might steal a part from John Bonham or Gene Krupa or Buddy Rich, and that's the most creative part of the night for them. Rather than doing so many fills, it's more fun to build an interesting pattern that makes up the whole song. Then you don't have to complain about anything, because you're doing it. Hopefully that's what it is—not playing too much, but doing something that's interesting.

I could relate to King Crimson in the post-punk time because it wasn't so blindingly technical. They believed in cool noises, and there was some emotion, not purely licks. It was wonderful. Echo & the Bunnymen were great around that time, too. The drummer is dead now, but he was phenomenal, using the toms as a texture and a part of the beat. Amazing. That guy, and the drummer from Killing Joke—they're just totally overlooked in the scheme of things, but it was beautiful how they used the whole kit.

RT: You got more tom-oriented around that time. Were you trying to get more textures out of the drums?

MB: It was about not being afraid to use them, and "textures" is the exact description of it. It also has to do with playing on gigs and not feeling like you're getting your point across. I've always played as hard as I could. And if you hit toms it kicks it up just another notch, and it's a little more exciting. I've always had a really loud snare drum, but the toms and the kick together are real dynamic and driving. For a long time I tried not to use any cymbals, either. I had a giant Zildjian Constantinople ride cymbal, and I'd hit it every once in a while and it would make this "whooooosh," like a sound from the dub records with phasing or whatever. But I tried to pretty much take it all away, strip it all the way back and just go with my good stuff.

RT: You play left-handed on a right-handed kit?

MB: Yeah, it was an experiment. The teacher I was talking about before said you wouldn't have any drive with the left hand if you hit the snare drum with your arms crossed, because you can only get your arm up so high. So if you're talking about matched grip, you can get a running start on the snare drum if you play open. The only concession is you

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Milton Sledge

Taking country to the top with Garth Brooks

By Robyn Flans

Photos by Rick Malkin

Sitting at his drums at Jack's Tracks studio in Nashville, Tennessee, recording Garth Brooks' *Ropin' The Wind,* Milton Sledge would never have predicted what would occur. Milton had worked with Brooks before, but not even Sledge would have thought that *Ropin' The Wind* would soon enter the *Billboard* pop charts at Number 1, nudging down Guns N' Roses' mammoth *Use Your Illusion* albums. Yeah, it was a great session, but like most studio musicians, Milton was hired to play a date. So he showed up, did the best job he could, and left. But who would have guessed that Brooks, with three releases in the last two years, would have sold over 11 million albums?

Milton Sledge was born in Athens, Alabama, and his beginnings consisted of the normal high school and rock 'n' roll bands. But after high school, he figured he'd get a taste of the world by joining the Army band. After three years touring the U.S., performing for military personnel, Milton returned to Alabama and signed up at Florence State University for his first bout with college. In 1975, he left school to pursue the practical side of music, but in 1980, he returned to study the business side of things. It was while he was in the Muscle Shoals area that Milton's career took a fateful turn.

Working at the studios in the area gave Sledge experience in session work. So in 1984, after recording Alabama's hit *LP, Roll On,* Milton was ready to move to Nashville, where he has continued to work with the likes of Kathy Mattea, Shenandoah, Barbara Mandrell, Crystal Gayle, Emmylou Harris, Marty Stuart, the Statler Brothers, the O'Kanes, and, of course. Garth Brooks.

RF: While you were cutting *Garth Brooks,* his first album, did you feel like something extraordinary was happening?

MS: I knew that would probably be a hit record, but I never imagined it would become so big. The first track we did was "Not Counting You," and we cut it several ways. First we cut it with a softer approach. It's an edgy kind of swing tune, which is the way it ended up, but we tried it a little more traditional.

RF: What does that mean, drum-wise?

MS: From my standpoint, it would mean maybe not pushing the beat so much, sort of laying back and letting it flow, maybe even more of a folky approach. When we first ran it down, the producer and the band were going, "Yeah, this might work," and Garth huddled us all together and said, "Guys, this is not really what I want. I want a little more edge, more of a live energy." It was more like what we would be doing if we were on stage. So we started playing around with it. There isn't really a leader on his session; everybody throws out their ideas, and the other players elaborate on them. We loved it after we got more of the live energy, which is sometimes difficult in the studio.

RF: What did you do to get that energy?

MS: I just sort of pushed the beat a little bit. It's really an attitude of that energetic, edgy, live thing. So Garth loved the feel of it, and I knew then that this guy had direction—not like some artists who lay back and are told what direction to have.

RF: I'd like to detail your work with Garth Brooks—the tracks that come to mind as most fun or creative. Let's start with the first album.

MS: "The Dance" was kind of a cool thing. That was one of those things where [producer] Allen Reynolds and I were talking about it before we even charted the song. The question at the time was whether or not the song even needed drums. I said, "I'm not really convinced it needs drums, either." We were thinking of more of an orchestral approach. So I sat in the control room, and the guys ran it down, and finally I said, "Let me just go try some things." The drumming on that is real sparse. There are a lot of cymbals and light touches, but I think it helped the track. I guess that's my bottom line—if I

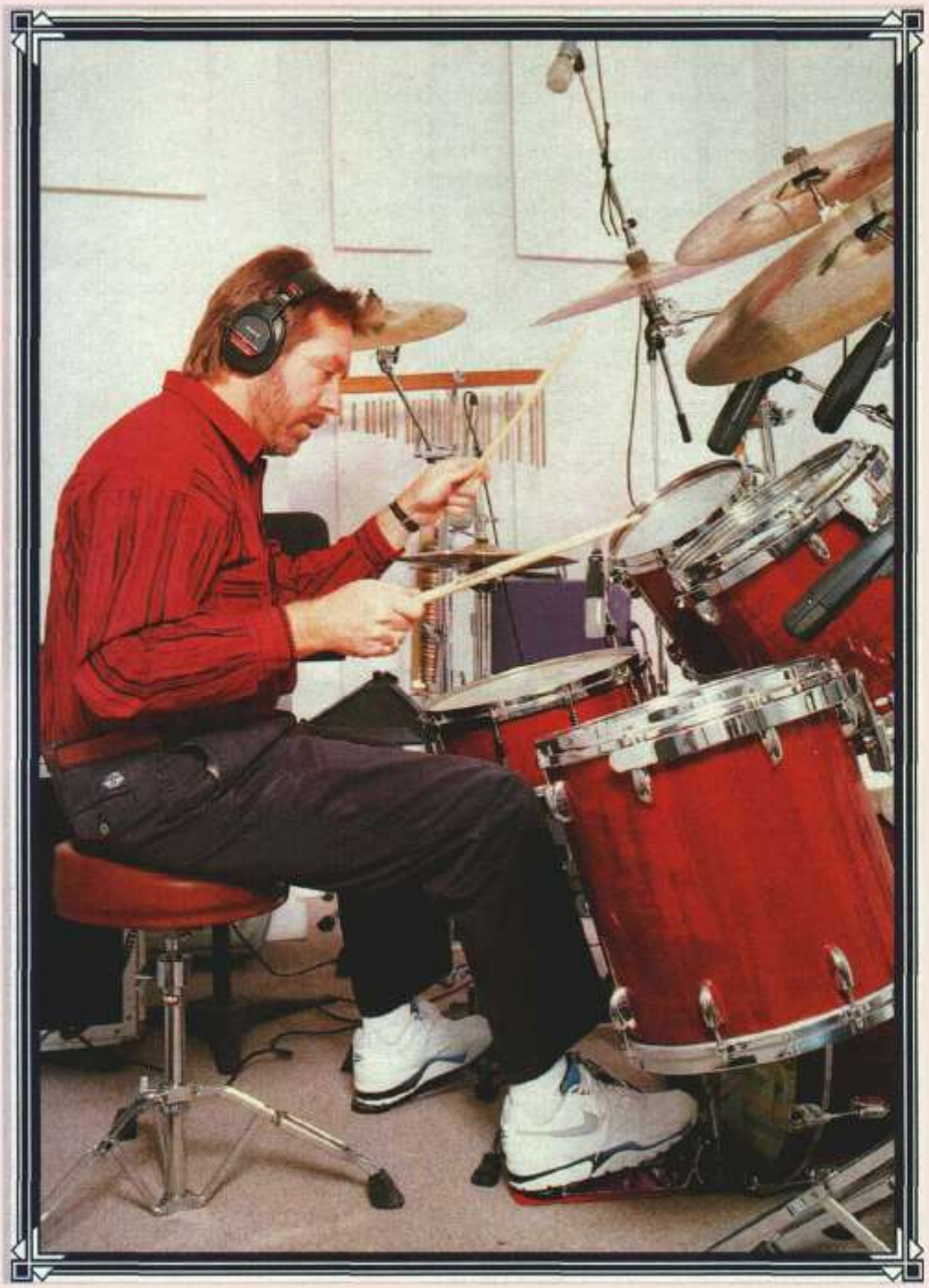
can help the song or the track without getting in the way. With most artists, I think the best job you can do is help promote the song.

RF: When you cut with Brooks, the rhythm section records live?

MS: Pretty much. On some of the cuts they'll even bring in steel guitar and fiddle all at one time. But for the most part it's just the basic section—rhythm guitar, electric guitar, bass, drums, piano.

RF: What about electronics?

MS: I think on one track on the first album I might have triggered a kick drum. I haven't used much at all.



RF: Whose choice is that?

MS: Probably mine. I just never felt like it added that much. I'm not against electronics, but it's not something I concentrate my efforts on. I look at it as a tool that's useful in certain situations.

RF: What about Brooks' second album, *No Fences?* What stands out in your mind?

MS: "The Thunder Rolls" was a fun track just because of the dynamics of it. It goes from just a whisper to really kicking it out. There are a lot of cymbal splashes and things like that. It's just a dramatic tune and a lot of fun to perform.

RF: How was that presented to you?

MS: On most of his tracks, he'll usually sit down and play them for us on guitar. Then we'll chart out the structure of the song, and trim it down or add parts, say, if it needs a solo. Or sometimes if it's too long, we'll need to restructure the song, or offer those suggestions. We just scoped it out as we went. Garth usually has some pretty definite ideas as far as percussion. Some of the cymbal chops on that were his idea. Believe it or not, he comes from sort of a heavy metal background. He was telling me he was into KISS and groups like that.

RF: How does he communicate ideas to you?

MS: He'll say, "Give me some metal here," which means to really go for some cymbals, or he'll say, "Really fill it up here," if he wants some big tom fills. As far as the actual part, though, it's pretty much left up to me.

RF: You mentioned charting the song while he's running it down. Is that common in Nashville?

MS: It depends. Sometimes you might do a session where there's a definite leader, and the producer has gotten together with him in advance and charted out the songs they intend to do. It can be different every day. Some producers have to get three or four tracks in a three-hour session, and other guys are more relaxed. If they get one or two in a session, they're really happy with that. A lot of times they're under pressure to get the job done as quickly as possible, especially the basic tracks.

RF: When that happens, do you always leave feeling happy?
MS: Not always. You really have to put a lot of faith in them. They hire you to give it your best shot. I usually don't make any bones about telling them if I think it can be done better. I think, "Hey, one more time is only going to take five minutes to do, and I think you'll be happier." Then there's that thing of doing it one too many times. I've seen that happen before, and that makes you feel just as bad as their keeping one you didn't particularly like. But most drummers are probably their own worst critics. I feel that way most of the time—"If I could have just done it one more time."
RF: Do you ever get disappointed when you hear it on the radio? Sometimes in country they mix the drums way back.
MS: Oh, I know. My background is from Muscle Shoals, and there the bass guitar and the kick drum are the loudest things you hear. I'm exaggerating, but that's what I grew up listening to, so it was a big adjustment for me to come here and hear those kinds of mixes. I honestly don't understand why that happens a lot. It's a big joke with me and a lot of the other drummers and bass players. We'll get a really good headphone mix and we'll say, "Hey, this isn't going to matter, because when the record comes out they won't hear the bass and drums anyway."
RF: What else stands out on the second album?
MS: "Friends In Low Places" was a lot of fun. That was kind of like a barroom song. I don't think we ran that song more than a couple of times. It was one of those things where somebody said, "Let's go ahead and cut it before we really learn it." I like doing that sometimes. I like going for something really quick, off the cuff. It has that feel of being a little sloppy. It has its own characteristics. As far as the drums, it's pretty much straight-ahead. It starts out real slinky, and by the time it gets into the song you realize it's some kind of funky barroom song.

One that stands out for me but that was never released is "Mr. Blue," that old song that someone like Bobby Vinton cut. It was really different and we ended up doing a real swing-y version. It was one of the first times I talked Garth into letting me use a piccolo snare drum. Before, I'd pull out something thin and pop-sounding, and we'd wind up going back to the wooden *6 1/2"* snare. On this, just for the contrast, he loved it. Consequently, I have three or four snare drums on this new album. I like changing them around to suit the song.
RF: Can you be specific about what would warrant a change?
MS: The way I view it, on something that is up-tempo, I like that really cracking, ring-y snare drum, where I don't muffle it. Let it honk. I like doing that, because when I first started in the studio, it was duct tape hell. Now I don't put tape on anything. I just tune the toms, and the only muffling I do is a little bit on the kick drum, and on the top of the snare. I put one of those rings on it. But on the piccolo and some of the other smaller drums, I take that junk off and let it ring.

If it's a big ballad, I go for that big marching snare drum. Sometimes changing the heads can make the difference. On my 6 1/2" Pearl *Free Floating* snare drum, I've tried all kinds of heads, and the only one that works is the Remo *Legacy.* That's probably my mainstay as far as snare drums. On the latest album, on "Rodeo," I used a 1967 Slingerland snare. I bought this thing in about 1975 for my nephew, who was entering school band. It's like a 5" practice drum. I gave it to him and for five years, I coveted it. One day I bought him a brand new snare and said, "I'll give you this brand new snare drum for that funky old wooden drum." The day we cut "Rodeo," I had just had some readjustment done to it and had just picked it up, so I pulled it out. I have a *clear Ambassador* on it—which is strange for me—and they loved it. I might have picked up the piccolo first, but this particular drum's sound is in between my other drum and the piccolo. It has that midrange-y crack to it. I did these little press roll things on it, some of that military junk that I knew would come in handy one day.
RF: What does Garth need from you?
MS: What does he need from me? Not money, for sure. [laughs] I guess just a good, strong track. I mean "strong" in every sense of the word. We don't cut much of his stuff with a click track. We're not that much of sticklers for it being exact. I know he likes a lot of emotion.

> "Not everybody is playing on records. I feel really fortunate to have been invited to the party."

RF: Is it unusual to not cut with a click track?
MS: Not as much as you might think. I know some players who just don't want to cut without them. I was never that firm on metronomic time. I don't want it to fluctuate, but sometimes you can click the groove right out of something. Sometimes people interpret the click differently, and that makes it even tougher. I think he just wants a good strong track from me.
RF: Does he need somebody who contributes a lot of ideas?
MS: Yes, I would agree with that. I think he wants a drummer to think musically. I think of the chord changes, where the song is going, what key it's in, what sounds good in particular places.
RF: Why do you think about what key it's in?
MS: Just for the pitch of the song. I don't want to be playing a bunch of weird things to distract what he might be singing. If you're thinking of it musically and listening to everybody else, you can avoid that sort of thing happening.
RF: What songs stick out on *Ropin' The Wind* besides "Rodeo?"
MS: "The River." There was a lot of percussion. Kenny Malone did some percussion on that, too.
RF: On the scratch vocal, did he sing with the same kind of emotion on "Shameless" as he did on the record?
MS: Yes. I was getting to that. That's a Billy Joel song. Billy brought it in. He and his band had been doing the song live. Liberty DeVitto did a real cool but busy drum part, so I con-

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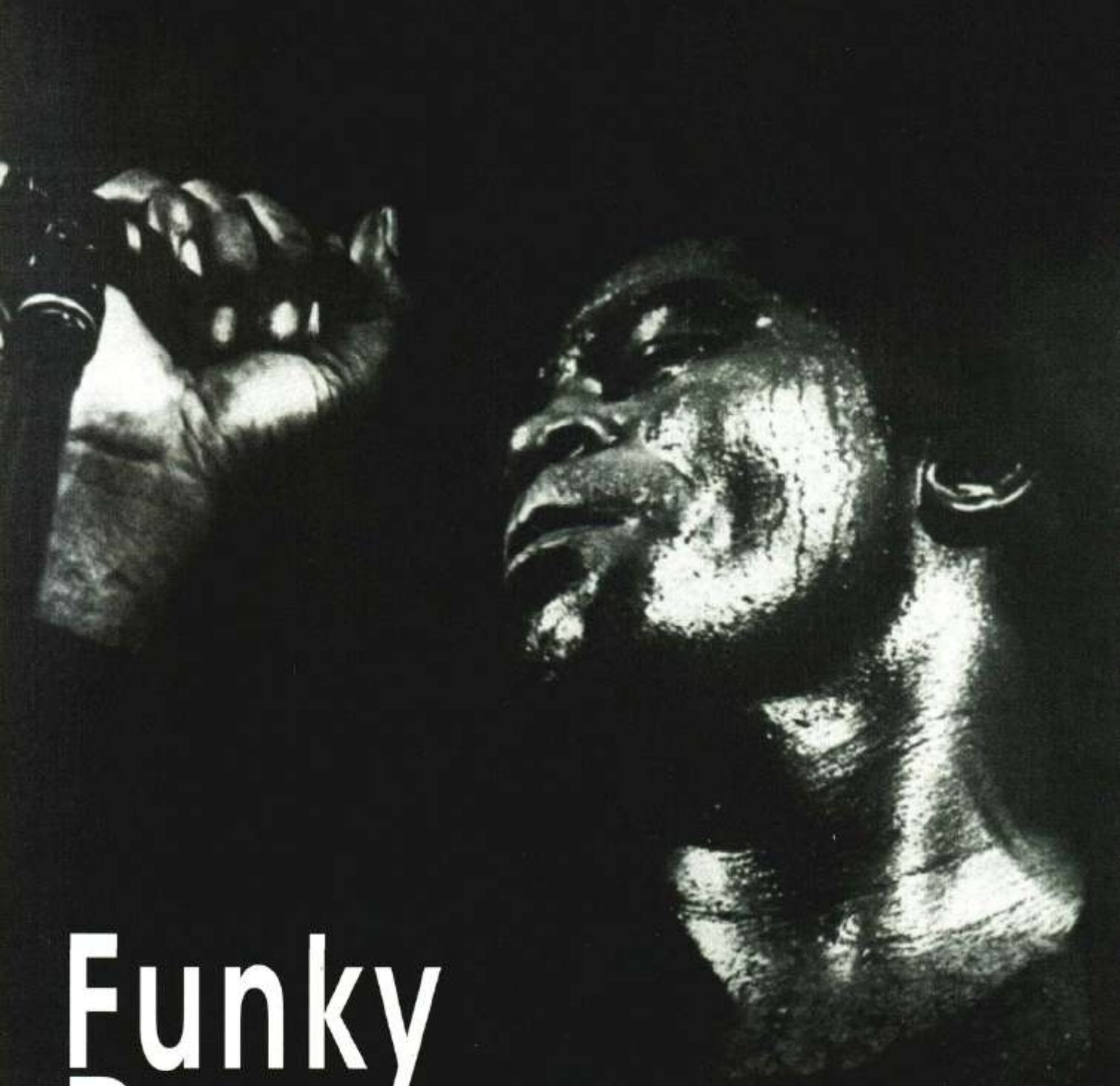


Funky Drummers:

The Drummers Of James Brown

By Adam J. Budofsky and Harry Weinger

Photo courtesy of Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies

"You don't have to do no soloin', brother; just keep what you got. Don't turn it loose! 'Cause it's a mutha." If you want to know the essence of the funky drummer, those words, and the drum break they introduce, should be enough. You can keep your fancy fills—this is about the *groove.*

James Brown rapped those instructions to Clyde Stubblefield on JB's 1970 song "Funky Drummer," and we're feeling the effects more today than at any time in the twenty years since. The band dropped out for eight bars, and Clyde was left to lay down what might be the most sampled and imitated drum beat in history.

It's been estimated that samples of JB's beats, screams, and exclamations have appeared on two or three thousand recordings, from cuts by Public Enemy and En Vogue to Fine Young Cannibals and George Michael. That alone would be cause for some serious investigation. But there's more to the story. The rhythm itself—sampled or merely imitated on the kit—is the basis for the hip-hop and Manchester beats, the two most pervasive dance grooves on the two sides of the Atlantic. That slinky, syncopated, irresistible funk literally defines the genres.

It's easy to forget where it all comes from. But to understand the importance of the BEAT, you really have to go to the source: James Brown. In the ten years between 1964 and 1974, James Brown set, broke, and reset the mold for groove music more times and with more impact than anybody on the planet. Tunes like "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag," "I Got You (I Feel Good)," "Cold Sweat," "I Got The Feelin'," "Say It Loud—I'm Black And I'm Proud," "The Payback," and "Sex Machine" not only defined R&B and funk, but they documented and, one could argue, affected the social fabric of the time. Change was happening at a rate unheard of in history, and JB's music and words were in the middle of it.

Pop and dance fans weren't the only people affected by JB's music, either. It's a good bet the fusion movement would have developed quite differently if it weren't for Brown's funk. Take a listen to Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew,* and it's hard not to make the Brown connection. Miles himself acknowledged it. And other pioneers of the fusion movement, like the Brecker Brothers and Herbie Hancock's Headhunters, freely used JB as a launching pad.

Today the music is *still* relevant. Recently, Polydor's James Brown box set, *Star Time,* convinced Living Colour to tackle JB's "Talkin" Loud & Sayin' Nothing." "We literally played that CD two months in a row when we were on the road," says drummer William Calhoun. "That's the funkiest music ever recorded." And Sinead O'Connor's "I Am Stretched Over Your Grave," which basically consists of Sinead singing over a loop of the "Funky Drummer" drum break, is a staple jukebox tune in Irish pubs.

It all comes back to the BEAT—and for our purposes, to the drummers themselves. We can point to JB as a rhythmic genius, but serious credit has to go to his drummers. They were able to translate Brown's ideas to the drumset and were relied upon to drive anywhere from 6- to 40-piece bands for hours at a time. They were also able to articulate revolutionary musical changes and survive the grueling lifestyle that Brown required of his ensemble.

In the 35 years of JB's career, lots of drummers have come and gone, some staying longer than others. Nat Kendrick and Clayton Fillyua were early pioneers. Jimmy Madison, Nate Jones, and Bill "Beau Dollar" Bowman made smaller yet still significant contributions. Session musicians like Panama Francis, Allan Schwartzberg, Bernard Purdie, and Billy Cobham played on some key tracks as well. (Schwartzberg's opening riff in "Funky President" is a sampler's staple.) Tony Cook and Arthur Dickson joined Brown in the late '70s and arc still with him today.

But three drummers in particular—Clyde Stubblefield, John "Jabo" Starks, and Melvin Parker—made an indelible mark on JB's most creative period. These are the drummers who are sampled the most. These are the drummers who were part of the classic JB bands that could burn up halls like the Apollo Theater hotter than any band before or after.

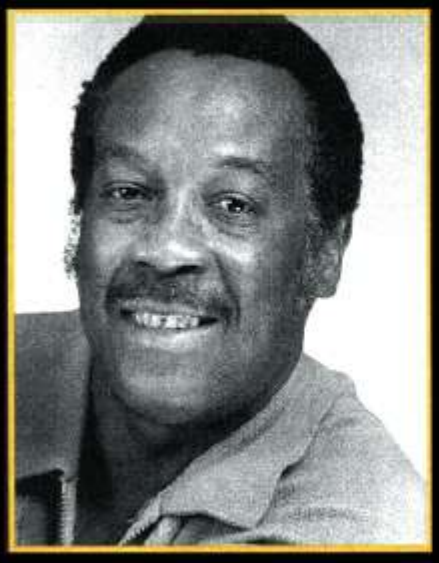
Photo courtesy of William "Bootsy" Collins

Left to right: Bootsy Collins digs in as John Starks, percussionist Johnny Griggs, and Clyde Stubblefield keep their eyes peeled for JB's cues.

As Brown's music progressed into the late 60s, it moved away from "soul" and towards "funk." The rhythm became the most important element. "James kept adding better musicians as time went on," according to Melvin Parker. "He started with the rhythm section, then

John "Jabo" Starks
(Photo courtesy of William "Bootsy" Collins)

Maceo and Melvin Parker
(Photo courtesy of William "Bootsy" Collins]



Clyde Stubblefield
(Photo by David Loeb)

built up to the horns. [Band leader] Nat Jones brought a cleanliness to the band's sound. The unit just got better and better—we could play chases, anybody's music."

The band developed into one of the tightest ensembles around. Constant touring honed their skills. According to Alan Leeds, who was publicity and tour director for James Brown from '69 to '73, bands then were dependent on performance revenues for income. The James Brown show played arenas, theaters, stadiums, and nightclubs 51 weeks out of the year. "The schedule sounds inhuman by today's standards," Leeds has said, "but unlike modern tours, we didn't have tractor trailers full of gear. We carried a single truck for uniforms, instruments, a modest audio system, and a lone strobe light. The only microphones were for vocals and horns. None of the rhythm section instruments were miked."

According to Stubblefield, "In those days we didn't use monitors, either. I remember playing Soldiers Field in Chicago once. We were down on the field and we had these little Vox EA. systems. I looked way up at the top rows, and I'm trying to figure out how they're going to hear us. But they were up there rockin'! My hands were bleeding. I couldn't stop, though. Blood was everywhere from hitting those drums so hard."

Obviously, with this sort of touring schedule, there wasn't much time for official rehearsals—what little practicing they did was on the bus, on stage, or in the studio. But tunes still came together quickly. In the studio, the band would set up so that James would be visible to the players the way he was on stage. This was for one simple reason: Playing in James' band required that you pay attention to James, because song arrangements weren't etched in stone; they were often ad-libbed.

You can hear it on the records: James' famous demand, "Take me to the bridge!", his directions to drop out and "give the drummer some." In addition, James would "conduct" the players to do certain things based on his body signals. "He would twitch, and I would catch it," explains Jabo. "If he turned one way real quick, that was a particular lick. Or when he went down on his knees during 'Please Please Please,' there would be a lick for that. You'd see him run his hand up by his face, and that would be another lick. He would do other things and that meant a choked cymbal. Those were the things that added to the show and made it more exciting."

When songs were being worked up, Brown would verbally describe what he wanted rhythms to sound like. On outtakes from his records, you can hear James grunting or imitating the sounds of the drums, trying to get the drummers to make often very subtle changes on accents and such. One must remember that this was a very rhythmically advanced band at this time. It's not so much that they were playing technically complex parts. It was more about the band being like one big rhythmic ensemble, and the balance of all the instruments (often including a few guitars and several horns) was very delicate. Since James didn't read music, though—and since "you couldn't really write that music out," according to Jabo Starks, "you couldn't write *thatfeel*"—a lot was left up to the drummers to interpret. They had the delicate job of giving James what he heard in his head, yet making it work within the rest of the tune.

Coming up with the right part wasn't always very easy. James Brown is a very strong-willed man, and his desire to have control over so much of his music and business forced his musicians to use a bit of psychology in dealing with him. Clyde: "When someone created something new that James didn't understand, he'd be like, 'Wow, I gotta see if I can change this here,' you know, 'Make it be where I created it.' But he couldn't change a lot of what I was doing," Clyde laughs, "because I didn't *know* what I was doing half the time.

"Sometimes he would have a bad day and take it out on the drummers on stage," Clyde explains. "He would use a mental attack type of thing, but I learned how he was

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JB's GROOVES

by William F. Miller

Melvin Parker, Clyde Stubblefield, and John "Jabo" Starks added an intangible that helped ignite James Brown's music. The following patterns, taken from some classic JB tunes, give a good example of how each propelled the band in their own way. (These tunes all appear on the highly recommended Polydor compilation *Star Time.)*

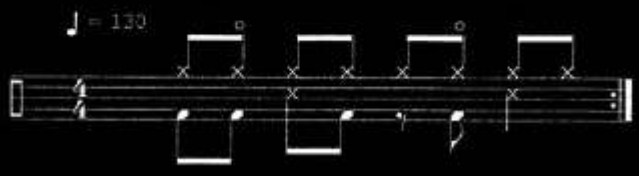
In listening to these three gentlemen, you can hear certain elements in their playing that separates them from each other. Melvin Parker, with his lighter touch, had a nice groove and a penchant for riding on the hi-hat and playing rimclicks, adding that "cool" element to the music.

Clyde Stubblefield, *the* funky drummer, had a heavier approach than Parker. That's not to say that he was overpowering—his dynamic range was terrific. Clyde's playing grooved hard—of course—and he added a lot of excitement to the feel by playing on the front edge of the beat. Many of his patterns were two-bar phrases, based on straight 16th notes, and very syncopated. While keeping to the spirit of the original pattern, he would embellish on them with many flams, ruffs, and tom hits. His patterns would become a churning rhythmic force that would groove *and* punctuate the horn hits dropping in and out.

Of course all these men had a strong groove, but John "Jabo" Slarks had one of the deepest "pockets." While not as subtle as Parker and maybe not as rhythmically exciting as Stubblefield, Starks had an infectious feel that just worked. He didn't need to vary it up—he'd just sit on a pattern and create a solid pulse.

The following patterns should give you a good idea of these excellent musicians' personal style. They all have something worth checking out. While looking at the notes might tell you a bit about the playing, be sure to hear these tunes—it could change your drumming!

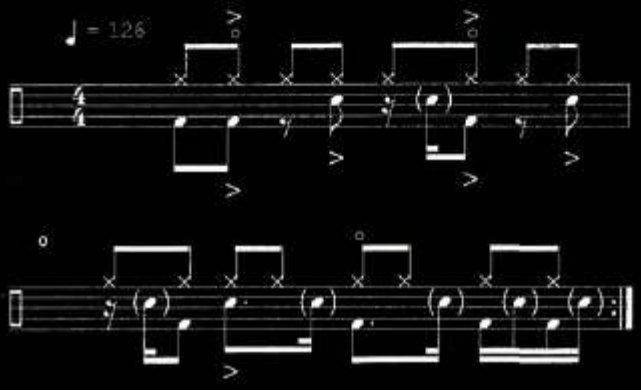
"I Got You"—recorded September 1964.
Drums: Melvin Parker
Notable on this track is Parker's syncopated bass drum.



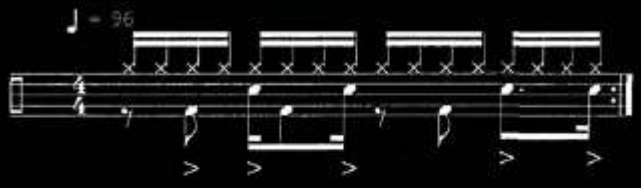
"Papa's Got A Brand New **Bag"**—recorded February 1965.
Drums: Melvin Parker
On this huge hit for James Brown, Parker's signature rim click and "cool" feel shine through.

"Cold Sweat"—recorded May 1967.
Drums: Clyde Stubblefield
Heavily syncopated using accents and ghost strokes, this is the classic that contains JB saying, "Give the drummer some!"

"I Got The Feelin"—recorded January 1968.
Drums: Clyde Stubblefield
In this incredible performance by Stubblefield, the two-bar phrase just percolates, accentuating horn hits along the way.

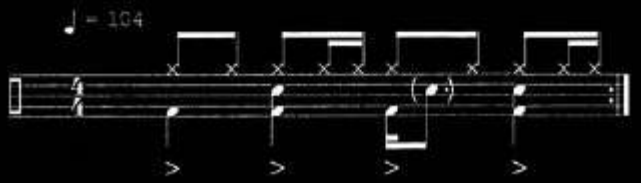


"Funky Drummer"—recorded November 1969.
Drums: Clyde Stubblefield
With constant 16ths on the hi-hat, Clyde locks the band in tight.



"Sex Machine"—recorded April 1970.
Drums: John "Jabo" Starks
Starks slightly swings the 16ths on this one, creating a deep groove.

"Talkin' Loud & Sayin' Nothing"—recorded October 1970.
Drums: John "Jabo" Starks
This pattern looks simple, but the feel is undeniable.



GETTING REPLACED IN THE STUDIO

By Rick Mattingly

Sitting in a plane on his way to L.A. in 1976, drummer Danny Cochran thought he had it made. "A friend of mine who I had played with in Texas was doing a record with Dave Mason," he recalls, "and they called me. I packed up my drums, went out there, set them up, and started playing. Right away, the producer came running out and said, 'I can't record those drums. They sound awful.' So he sent someone over to S.I.R. to get some drums that were tuned properly for recording."

Not knowing how to tune for the studio was just the beginning of Cochran's problems. Eventually he was dismissed and Jeff Porcaro was brought in to finish the album. "That was a crushing blow," Cochran says. "But I was just a kid and wasn't really prepared. I guess you have to go through those types of situations to find out that you're not there yet."

About a year and a half later, Cochran got another shot at the studio. "I had moved to LA. with a songwriter friend named Jerry Williams, who had a deal with Warner Bros.," Cochran says. "We had a great band, and we were rehearsing to do Jerry's album. But when it came time to go in the studio, the people at Warners wanted a big name on the record, because it was Jerry's first release. So they got Jeff Porcaro."

One can imagine how Danny must have felt to be so close to getting on a record and then being told that this famous studio player was going to do it instead. And to have it happen twice. Most guys would probably give up and go home.

But not Cochran. "Sure," he admits, "it was a big disappointment, but I didn't take it as a slap in the face. Jeff is a great drummer, and he was one of my big influences. So I went to the studio every day and watched Jeff record. He was real professional, and watching him work was an unbelievable lesson. At one point they were doing this fast samba, and a stick flew out of Jeff's hand. But if I hadn't seen it, I would never have known it happened because he grabbed another stick from his stick bag without messing up the feel at all. If that had happened to me, I would probably have stopped playing and ruined the take.

"I was able to ask Jeff questions about various things, and he was super nice. He even let me sit behind the drums he cut *Silk Degrees* on, which blew me away. So it was a big learning experience for me. I took something bad that happened and kind of turned it around."

Cochran went on to record a couple of tracks with Delbert McClinton, and he recently did all the drumming on the latest album by

Anson Funderburgh & the Rockets. [See this month's *Update.]* He feels that in the long run, watching Porcaro in the studio may have been better for his career than if he had done the album himself, in terms of how much he was able to learn.

But still, what happened to Cochran on those first two occasions confirms a lot of drummers' worst nightmare: that they will never make it onto a record because a select few studio players get to do all the work. And it seems to be a Catch-22 situation in which the drummers are told that someone "more experienced" is needed—but how do *you get* that much-needed experience if no one lets you do that first session?

Veteran studio drummer Hal Blaine says that the first step is to do exactly what Danny Cochran did. "A drummer who goes in the studio and ends up getting replaced by a heavy-duty studio guy should be *thankful,"* Blaine contends. "You couldn't buy that opportunity. You can't hire Jeff Porcaro to come and teach you how to play drums on a session. So you should be grateful that you can watch and listen and learn exactly what goes on.

"It's like a kid who has learned to fly a single-engine Piper Cub airplane," Hal continues. "He doesn't go straight from that to flying a 747. First he has to spend some time sitting in the cockpit next to an experienced pilot. The worst thing you can do is go in and do a bad job, because people will remember you more for screwing up than for doing it correctly. Better to let a pro do it while you watch, listen, and absorb as much as you can."

That's exactly what Andy Newmark did early in his career when he was in the studio with Carly Simon and was told that Jim Gordon was going to be brought in for a couple of tracks on the album they were making, *No Secrets.* It wasn't as if Newmark had never been in the studio, either. The year before, Andy did Simon's *entire Anticipation* album, and he had been touring with her for over a year.

"The reason I *did Anticipation,"* Newmark explains, "was that the producer, Paul Samwell-Smith, liked the vibe and intimacy of Carly's little band. He was looking to make the best record he could exploiting that particular sound and group of players. But before we even went to England to do the album, Carly was the first to tell us, 'Look, I have no control over what the producer wants to do. If he feels strongly about using other players, I'll go with that.' It just so happened that the guy she chose as producer wanted to try it with her band.

"When No Secrets came around a year later," Newmark continues, "it was the same situation. She told the band, 'I can't guarantee that we're all going to make the record together. I'm not going to alienate myself from a producer by insisting on certain players. I just want to make a great record. If it can include you guys, great. If not, don't be offended.'"

Newmark had no problem with that. "There were a lot of good drummers around, and I could understand a producer wanting to work with one of them. And Carly was signed as a solo artist. The band was not essential to what the record company wanted."

Richard Perry was hired to produce *No Secrets,* and he told Simon to bring her band with her. But he also told her to inform the band that he probably wouldn't use them on everything. "Perry wanted to make a very different kind of record *than Anticipation,"* Newmark says. "That was basically a folk record with a drummer playing brushes and trying not to get in the way too much. Perry wanted a slick, American-sounding record with a big sound and

When The Big Break Becomes The Big Disappointment

"I felt like I had failed miserably," recalls Jim Keltner of the first time he was replaced in the studio.

Photo by Rick Malkin

Jeff Porcaro had the gig with Steely Dan, but for *The Royal Scam* they only wanted his drums.

heavy bottom end.

"So we went in and played through all the songs over the course of about three weeks. Maybe five of them worked with me to the point where Perry felt he could make a record out of it. But the other four or five songs, in his opinion, were not happening. And as I began to understand the kind of record he was trying to make, I could see where my drumming wasn't up to scratch in that context. It called for a certain style of open drumming that guys like Jim Gordon, Jim Keltner, and Russ Kunkel did really well, but that wasn't in my background. I knew about playing funky with all the little 16ths, but I didn't know how to empty out enough notes to give it air to breathe properly.

"One day Perry told me that Jim Gordon was in town, and he was going to bring him in for some of the tracks. So I asked if I could come to the sessions. Being offended was the last thing on my mind. I was just gassed to meet Jim Gordon and listen to him play, because he was in his prime at that time. They cut 'You're So Vain,' which was the big hit from that album, and that was really Jim Gordon at his best. He put all that air between the 8th notes on the cymbal, and there was no funky edge on it. It was just an attitude thing, but it wasn't part of my heartbeat yet. I hadn't experienced that certain thing in my playing."

Newmark decided to take his learning experience a step further than just watching Gordon. "I asked if I could play some little percussion things, like shakers or congas, just to make myself useful," Andy remembers. "What I really wanted was to be part of Jim Gordon's groove—feel it through the headphones and lock in with it so I could get a handle on it myself. I don't even know if they had my mic' on. I just wanted to be in the room and watch Jim play and hear the conversations between him and Richard Perry. I was full of questions and was checking everything out. I noticed how dead he tuned the drums and how mashed up all the heads were by the time he was finished. I realized that even though it didn't look like he was hitting hard, he was really laying into those drums.

"So that was a great experience," Newmark says. "I wasn't disappointed because, A, I was told upfront that it may happen; B, I could hear that I wasn't able to do what the producer was going for; and C, I was replaced by one of the all-time great rock drummers."

Andy Newmark had the right attitude when he was replaced by Jim Gordon on Carly Simon's No *Secrets* album.

And when Perry brought Jim Keltner in to do a couple of the other tracks, it was the same thing all over again. "Keltner and Gordon were both very nice," Newmark says, "and it was great getting to talk with them. When you get to know someone as a person, you understand where the notes come from. Especially a guy like Keltner. You talk to him for half and hour and you see that he looks at things opposite from the way everyone else does. And that's in his playing. He does quirky, bizarre things that would sound corny if most of us tried them. But Jim manages to do it because he believes in it."

The fact that Jim Keltner was one of the drummers who replaced Newmark on Simon's album is a testament to the fact that those who get replaced can end up being those who do the replacing. Keltner himself had been replaced by Jim Gordon early in his career.

"It was 1968," Keltner recalls, "and I had just joined a band called MC, which Warner Bros, had big plans for. They were good songwriters and had been given a big enough budget to use really good musicians on the demos they made for their two or three most important songs. So Jim Gordon was on drums for those demos.

"When I heard those demos for the first time at rehearsal, I thought the drumming was fantastic, and I figured, 'This is great. I'll be able to cop those drum fills and that drum sound and everyone will love me.' So when we started to rehearse I made sure that I learned all the bits Jimmy had played. I thought it was working pretty good, but then the news was delivered to me that I wouldn't be playing on those three songs. They were going to bring Jim Gordon in.

"I felt real slighted," Keltner admits. "I felt like I had failed miserably, that I didn't measure up, and all my confidence drained. I remember distinctly that I was very depressed.

"But it was never in my mind not to go to the sessions when they recorded those songs. When I got there, Jimmy immediately put me at ease. He told me that he had seen me play at the Troubadour one night, and that he liked the way I played. That made me feel good right off the bat. I told him that I really liked the way he had played on the demos, and asked if he would mind if I sat in the room with him while he played. He said he wouldn't mind at all, so I literally sat on

Beach Boy **Dennis Wilson was** *happy* **to have Hal Blaine replace him in the studio, especially when surf was up.**

the floor right next to him. I was fascinated by the control he had and his fabulous feel. Hal Blaine was my idol at that point, and Jimmy had a lot of Hal's stuff down. But Jimmy was taking it a step further, in that he played a little stronger than Hal. I found out later that Jimmy had been a disciple of Hal's, and had been on a lot of dates with Hal, playing percussion.

"I was also curious as to how he was getting such a great drum sound, and I picked up on the drumheads he was using, which at the time were Remo *Sparkletones.* So I put some *Sparkletone* heads on my drums and, sure enough, I got a pretty similar sound.

"But I would never have been aware of any of that had I not showed up at the session and tried to learn from the situation. Jimmy Gordon was one of the first guys, along with Hal Blaine, that I got to sit next to and see play, and it affected me deeply. For a long while I was pretty heavily influenced by Jimmy, and I utilized that as part of my growth."

Although Keltner's feelings were hurt when he was first told that he was going to be replaced, still, everyone was upfront about the situation and he, like Newmark, was able to attend the sessions and learn from them. Not all drummers are so lucky. Jeff Porcaro wasn't, but he still managed to turn a negative situation into a positive one.

"Yeah, here we go," Porcaro says, taking a deep breath. "I was with Steely Dan. I had done two tracks with them on the *Pretzel Logic* album, I had toured with them for a year and a half, and when we got off the road we did the *Katy Lied* album, on which I played all the tracks but one. I was really proud of my playing on that album, and I couldn't wait for the next one.

"Walter Becker called me one day and told me they were doing demos for the next album, and asked if he could borrow a set of my drums so that he could work out some ideas at home. So I got all excited because I figured that in a few weeks I'd be in the studio doing the next Steely Dan record. A few weeks went by and I didn't hear a word from anybody.

"Then a friend of mine told me that Steely Dan was in the studio doing an album. I was like, 'WHAT?!' So I called the producer and, sure enough, they were recording *The Royal Scam* with Bernard Purdie. And they were using my drums and cymbals," Jeff adds, laughing at the irony, or audacity, of the situation.

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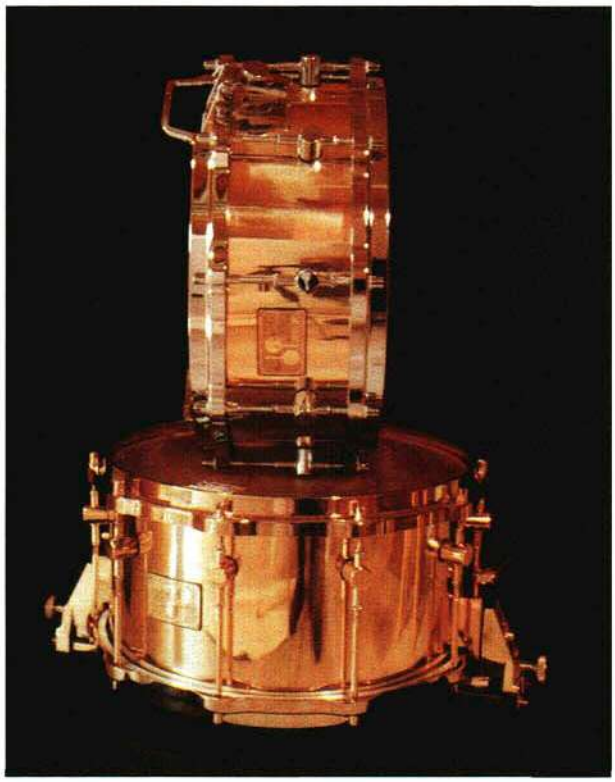
Photo by Rick Malkin

By swallowing his pride, Kenny Aronoff actually saved his gig with John Mellencamp.

Sonor Symphony Snare Drums and AX-Hat

By Rick Mattingly

German engineering has created two classical masterpieces and one nifty gadget.



Photos by *Rick Mattingly*

Sonor has recently added some new items to their already impressive line of drums and hardware: two *Symphony* model snare drums and their *AX-Hat* attachment for mounting a pair of auxiliary hi-hats.

Symphony Snare Drums

These drums are part of the *Signature Series,* and are offered in two sizes: The *SY 1407 MS* measures 7 1/4 x14, while the *SY 1405MC* is 5 3/4 x 14. I'll start with several features that are identical on both drums, and then discuss each one individually. Both have brass shells, die-cast rims, 24-strand stainless-steel snares, and ten tubular tuning lugs (each of which is attached to the shell with a single screw). The tension rods are equipped with Sonor's *Snap Lock* system to prevent slippage. Each drum comes fitted with a Sonor *CN* calfskin batter head.

The 5 3/4" drum has chrome-plated hardware and a standard lever-type snare throwoff. It also contains an internal muffler, which is the one item of the drum that seemed a bit old-fashioned.

Internal muffler notwithstanding, it's hard to find fault with a drum that sounds this good. It has a dry, crisp sound characteristic of a good symphonic snare drum, even with the muffler completely disengaged (probably in large part due to the calfskin batter head). It handles the full range of dynamics with ease, from thunderous *triple fortes* to delicate *pianissimos.* Snare response is excellent to the very edge of the batter head. For general-purpose orchestral work, this drum could cover a lot of ground.

The 7 1/4" drum is better suited as a *tambour militaire.* In fact, when I first put it on a stand and played it, I was so astounded by its sound that I checked the underside of the drum to see if it had been fitted with gut snares. It had the same stainless-steel snares as the smaller drum, but they were controlled by a parallel-throwoff mechanism. This drum's shell was unencumbered by an internal muffler; instead, a clip-on external muffling device was provided—which is a step in the right direction. Also, all of the hardware on this model was brass-plated to match the shell.

The drum had a deep, full, "military" sound with tremendous projection. Whereas the smaller drum was equipped with a thin batter head, this one had the medium-weight *CN* calfskin model. Between that and the extra depth of the drum, the snare response was not quite as sensitive as on the thinner model. But since this drum is better suited for more rudimental-style playing, that's not a major problem.

Both drums are of high quality throughout, and would be excellent choices for symphony percussionists. Again, the 5 3/4" drum is the most versatile, and some set players might find it appealing. It lists for $1,070, while the 7 1/4" drum retails at $1,340.

AX-Hat

Having a set of hi-hat cymbals mounted on a holder instead of a pedal is nothing particularly new, but Sonor has come up with a device to make it more versatile. The problem with most auxiliary hi-hat holders is that you can't vary the pressure on the cymbals very easily. If you want a tight sound, you generally have to push down hard on the top-cymbal clutch while you tighten it. If you want a sloshy sound, you must loosen the clutch and let the top cymbal simply rest on the bottom one.

Sonor has added some adjustment possibilities to their new *Z 3044 AX-*

Hat. First, beneath the bottom cymbal is a seven-position tilter that lets you angle the bottom cymbal (anywhere from not at all to quite a bit). When you have a loose top cymbal over it, that extra angle can add quite a bit of "slosh" to the sound. The tilter rotates and drops into place via several slots, so once you have it set where you want it, it isn't likely to slip—the way conventional hi-hat tilters are prone to do.

Second, at the bottom of the unit there is a spring and two counter nuts with which you can adjust the tightness of the top cymbal. You can leave it completely loose, or you can really press the two cymbals together. I tried it with an old pair of hats that were slightly warped, and was still able to get a tight, crisp sound.

For those who use auxiliary hats, or for double bass players who aren't always in a position to vary the pressure on their hi-hats by using a hi-hat pedal, this Sonor attachment can offer a degree of control previously lacking on such devices. One other nice feature is that the unit is only 14 3/4" long, so you should be able to fit it into even the tightest setup. (You will need some type of clamp to mount it, though, as one is not included.) *The AX-Hat* is priced at $60.

Gibraltar Road Series Rack System

by Rick Van Horn

Bigger isn't always better —but sometimes it is.

Drum rack systems and their component parts have undergone quite a bit of development since they were introduced a few years ago. You might say that we're already seeing the "second generation" of racks. This is especially true with the Gibraltar *Road Series,* from Kaman Corporation, since it represents a step up from their very popular and market-proven *Power Rack Series.* While that series serves the needs of many drummers very well (and will be continued), Kaman's intention with the *Road Series* is to offer something a bit more heavy-duty for drummers working with larger, heavier drums—or who simply need rack components that can take a heavier beating. As a result, while the *Road Series* rack utilizes the same steel pipes as are found on the *Power Rack Series,* it features beefier clamps and more flexible connections.

The *Road Series* rack system consists of various lengths of 1 1/2" chromed steel tubes and a wide variety of connectors and clamps. Each rack is created of T-style legs and one or more horizontal crossbars. The tubular bars allow for infinite positioning of mounting clamps, and the adjustability of the various bar-connectors permits a lot of flexibility in the positioning of the bars themselves—including their height, which may be different from bar to bar. All of this adds up to a rack system that is very user-friendly.

Road Series racks are available in three different package configurations. The *GRS 400* is the basic rack, featuring two T-legs and a 50" horizontal crossbar created by two 24" pipes connected by an adjustable angle clamp. The *GRS 400C* uses a single 46" curved pipe for its crossbar. *GRS 100* and *GRS 100C* side extensions (one crossbar and one leg) are available for either of these systems. The *GRS IOOOC* is a three-sided, double-bass configuration employing two curved bars (one over each bass drum) connected at a center post, and a two-piece horizontal bar on each side. Each of the packages above comes equipped with a supply of multi-clamps and memory locks, and at least one Gibraltar clip-on logo badge. The bigger the system, the more clamps and badges.

The folks at Kaman realize, however, that the real beauty of rack systems is how they can be tailored to suit individual needs. So they wisely offer all the components necessary to create one's own customized rack through their Percussion Service Center. You can start with a package and add on, or you can "order a

la carte" from the outset. In accordance with this concept, the configuration I used to test the *Road Series* rack was something I custom-created out of parts contained in the *GRS 1000C* package we were sent.

I was mainly concerned with the flexibility of the system, the functionality of the various components, and the ease with which it could be set up, used, broken down, and transported. In a nutshell, I was impressed on all counts. The parts fit together smoothly, could be adjusted easily—even in minute amounts—and stayed where they were put. Once I had figured out how best to break it down (which amounted to deciding which items to leave on what bar), that breakdown was quick and easy. I carried all the bars with the various clamps left in place, and was able to fit them into a 36" duffle bag. (The longest bar I used was 30".) It wasn't *light,* but it was manageable. If you were using more bars than I did, or longer ones, you'd probably want to use two containers to split the load.

The potential problem with any tubular-style drum rack is clamp slippage. The heavier the drums—and the harder they're hit—the greater the risk of this problem occurring. Aware of this fact, Kaman designed the *Road Series* clamps with a tremendous amount of surface-contact area, and fitted them with hardened-steel bolts and oversized T-screws. I was able to tighten the clamps down firmly—without any hand discomfort, and with no discernable marring of the pipes. I mounted drums of a variety of brands, working up to the heaviest I had available (a 16x16 suspended "floor" tom). I never had any problem with a drum slipping, no matter how far out it was extended on a holder arm. The same was true of cymbals on booms, and even a small—but fairly heavy—monitor amplifier. I set the clamps once, mounted each item, and pounded away. Nary a jiggle!

I must say that the size of the hinged memory locks seemed like a bit of overkill. They weren't necessary as backups against slippage; the *Road Series* clamps were simply too efficient to need the help. They were much bigger than they needed to be to simply mark the positions of those clamps, and, as such, added a bit of carrying weight that was unnecessary. They did blend with the other oversized components cosmetically, though—giving a consistent look to all the parts of the rack. And speaking of cosmetics, the clip-on logo badges are a nice touch. They give drummers the choice of whether or not to *prominently* display the brand of their rack. (The Gibraltar name is quite visible on the faces of all the clamps, although it's smaller.)

According to John Roderick, Kaman's percussion product manager, their intention with the *Road Series* rack system was to offer drummers "a high-quality, user-friendly, totally professional rack system at reasonable prices." I can attest to the first three attributes; I'll let the prices speak for themselves. The *GRS 400* lists for $399.50, the *GRS 400C* is priced at $395.50, and the *GRS 1000C* goes for $899.50. Extension packages are available for $199.50, and all components may be purchased separately.

Danmar Products

by Rick Van Horn

311 Cymbal Stand

Recent responses to a question posed in MD's *Liaison* department indicated that many drummers are interested in hardware that is lighter and easier to carry than current high-end models—yet still durable and of high-quality construction. Danmar Percussion Products, a company well-known for its wide variety of acoustic percussion instruments and handy hardware items, offers a stand specifically targeted toward those drummers.

The flush-base design of Danmar's *311* stand is undeniably old-fashioned. In fact, Frank DeVito, Danmar's president, states that it harks back to the classic 1960s-vintage Camco and Slingerland stands. For those of you too young to have been exposed to this design, the "flush base" means that the legs are not created from an A-frame tripod that slides up and down the shaft of the stand. Instead, three individual legs are each hinged to the bottom of the shaft. A large wing bolt tightens or loosens an even larger washer, which, in turn, secures or releases the hinged ends of the legs. When tightened, the legs slope up only slightly, creating a base that is almost "flush" with the floor. (This design facilitates close placement around the set.) When loosened, the legs simply swing up, parallel to the stand's central

shaft, for easy pack-up.

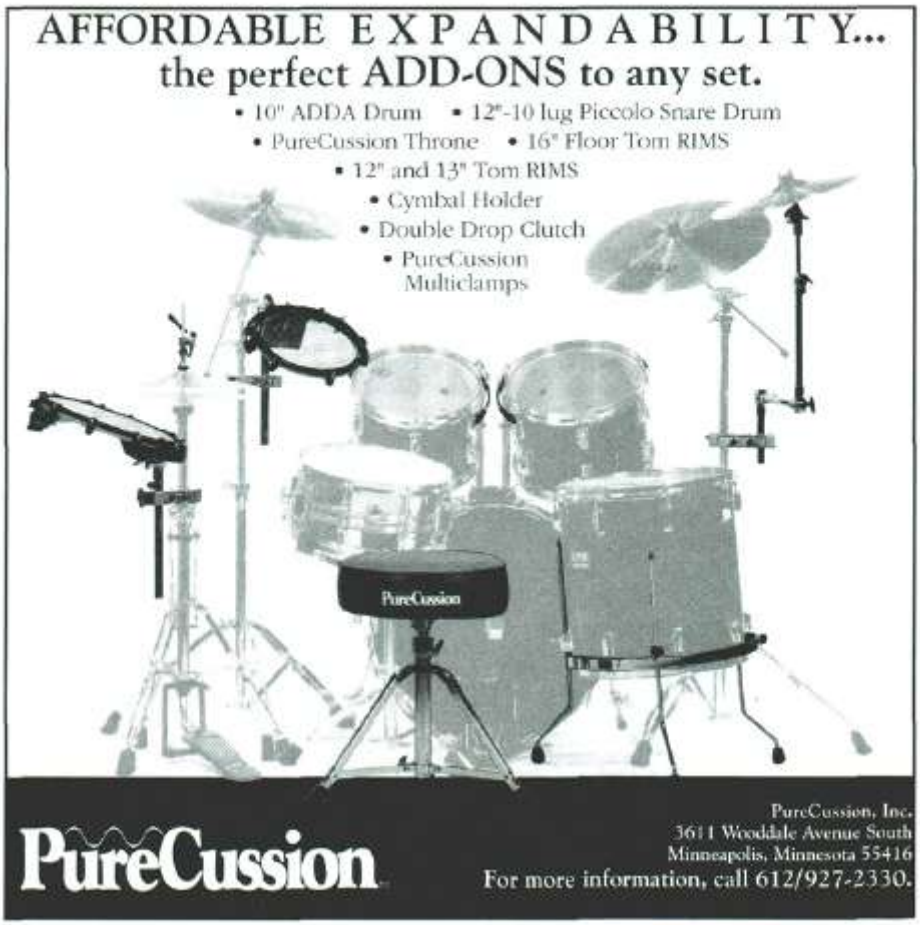
This is definitely a light- to medium-duty stand. Its effective height range is from a low of 2 1/2' to a high of 4 1/2', and the stability limitations of the base would not make it practical for a 20" China cymbal that you planned to mount high and beat to death. However, if you think you could use a stand that is well-made, light in weight (only 3 1/2 pounds!), and moderately priced ($65), the Danmar *311* stand is one to check out.

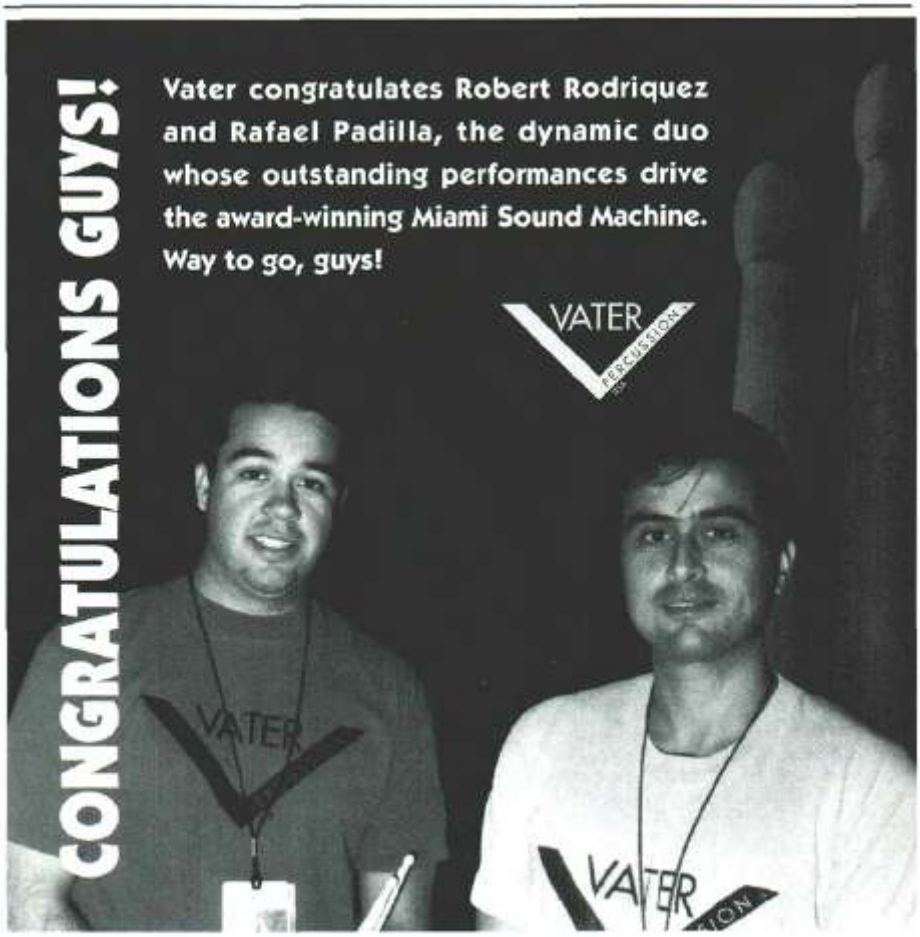
1027 Stick Holder

Danmar's *1027 Stick Holder* is simply an 8 1/2" length of 2"-diameter black PVC pipe, with a red plastic cap at one end. It's fitted with a clamp that allows it to be attached conveniently to any vertical stand pipe and angled toward you for easy access. It's designed to be functional, not fancy, and I found it to be just that—as well as durable and versatile.

A *versatile* stick container? Yup. If you break a lot of sticks and simply need access to replacements in a hurry, the *Stick Holder* has the capacity to contain up to six sticks (depending on their size). One *Holder* on each side of your kit would provide you with a pretty healthy supply of spares. But the *Stick Holder* also serves another helpful function. I often need to switch back and forth between sticks and brushes, mallets, *Multi-Rods,* or other such items during a song. I found it very convenient to have these items pre-placed in the *Stick Holder* (mounted on my hi-hat stand under the cymbals), and then quickly swap them for the sticks I had in my hands. The *Stick Holder's,* large diameter made an easy target to toss the sticks into as I grabbed the new items. Smaller stick containers and traditional stick bags don't offer this particular convenience.

The Danmar *1027 Stick Holder* is simple, well-made, and convenient. What more should such a device be? Well, *affordable* would be nice. And at a list price of $18.75, it is!





INNOVATION IN STEP WITH MUSICIANS AND THEIR MUSIC

"Excellent. Outstanding cymbal sounds. Definitely more volume, more definition, a wider dynamic range, the low end is a remarkable improvement. They just sound bigger."

Paiste Line: 20" Dry Ride, 14" Dark Crisp Hi-Hat, 10" Splash, 16" & 17" Full Crash, 12" Heavy Hi-Hat. Sound Creation: 18" Dark Crash.

- DAVE GARIBALDI

(Tower of Power, Wishful Thinking)

"I've waited for a long time for a cymbal like this."

Paiste Line: 15" Sound Edge Hi-Hat, 22" Power Ride, 20" Power Crash (3), 20" Full Crash.

- ALEX VAN HALEN

(Van Halen)

"The 'Signature' series has a brilliance, clarity and musicality that is unmatched. In the studio or on stage their versatility and dynamic range allows me to use them from the quietest to the loudest passages without ever feeling compromised."

Paiste Line: 8", 10" & 12" Splash, 14" Full Crash, 16", 18" & 20" Power Crash, 16" Thin China, 18" Heavy China, 14" & 15" Heavy Hi-Hat, 22" Power Ride, 20" Flat Ride.

- DOANE PERRY

(Jethro Tull)

"They feel like pretty, old cymbals. They feel like they have already been broken in - a beautiful, mellow, crystal kind of sound, smooth and thin."

Paiste Line: 22" Rough Ride (with rivets), 14" Dark Crisp Hi-Hat, 22" Thin China, 16" & 17" Fast Crash, 20" Full Crash, 18" Full Crash. Sound Creation: 20 Short Crash, 14" Short Crashes (2 for Hi-Hat).

- JIM KELTNER

(Travelling Wilbury's, Session)

"When I heard the 'Signature' cymbals in the studio, I couldn't believe my ears. These cymbals really made me pay more attention to the roll of playing cymbals in the studio and live. Each note is detected with these cymbals. Also, they have a very directional, clean sound."

Paiste Line: 13" Heavy Hi-Hat, 15", 16" & 18" Mellow Crash, 18" Thin China, 8" Splash, 19" Dry Ride.

- MICHAEL BAKER

(Zawinul Syndicate, Billy Childs)

"You feel like playing with these cymbals. They've got fantastic stick rebound. They just swing by themselves."

Paiste Line: 13" Dark Crisp Hi-Hat, 17" & 18" Fast Crash, 22" Mellow Ride, 22" Heavy China.

- AL FOSTER

(Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins)

"From the moment I first heard the Paiste Line, it was obvious to me that a truly new generation of cymbals had been born. The combination of great feel, quick response, streamlined look, and sparkling musical sound was unlike any cymbals I had heard. They're really a joy to play!"

Paiste Line: 13" Dark Crisp Hi-Hat, 10" Splash, 16" Fast Crash, 17" Full Crash, 18" Mellow Crash, 22" Flat Ride, 21" Full Ride, 20" Thin China.

- PAUL WERTICO

(Pat Metheny)

"This is the first cymbal that has a wide dynamic range without being overpowering. They cut through in all dynamic situations with the same clarity. In the studio, they are fantastic."

Paiste Line: 20" Full Ride, 17" Fast Crash, 14" Heavy Hi-Hat Top & 14" Sound Edge Bottom, 22" Thin China.

- NDUGU CHANCLER

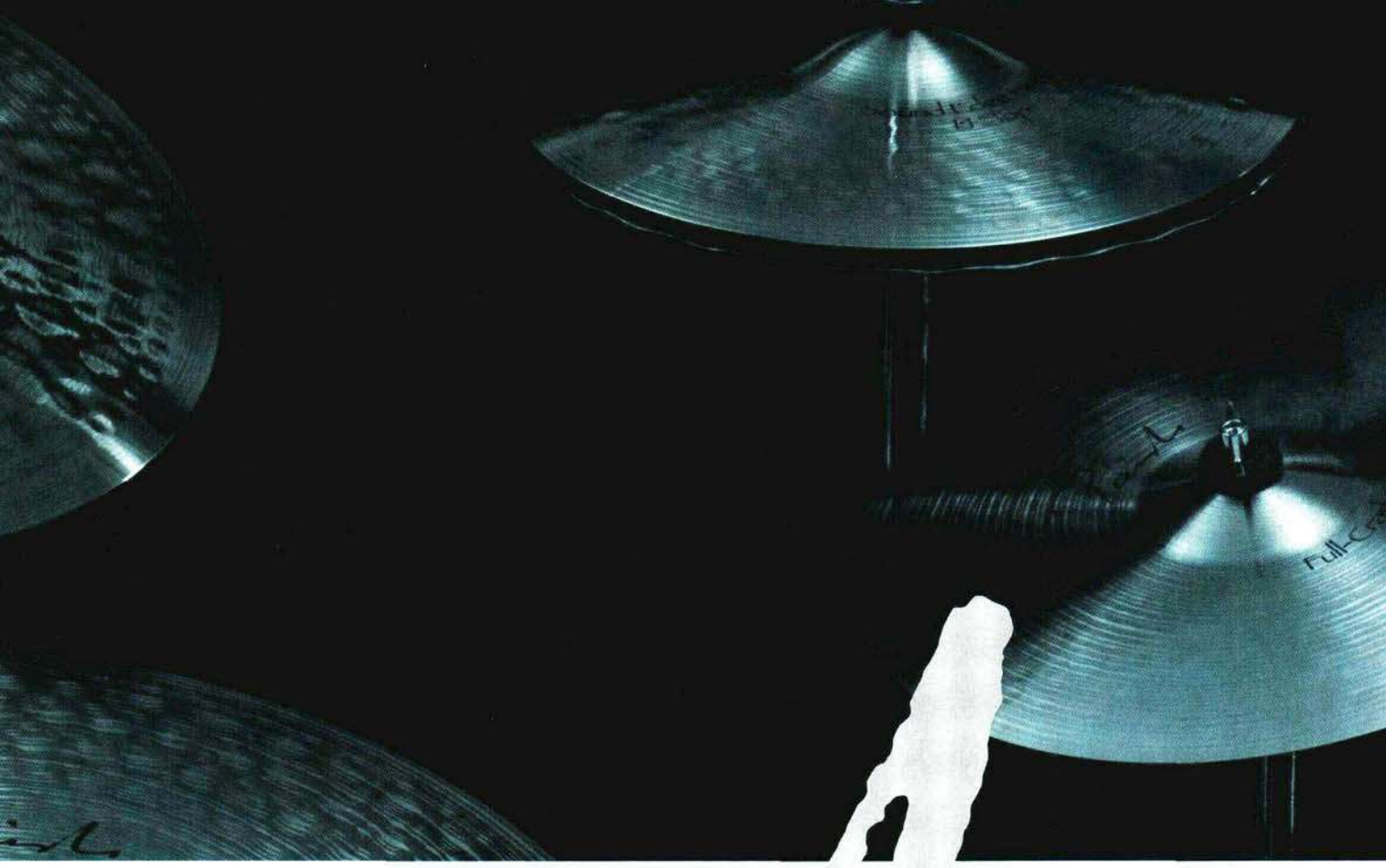
(Crusaders, Miles Davis)

"These cymbals speak very quickly, with power and they have dignity."

Paiste Line: 22" Dry Heavy Ride, 14", 16" & 20" Thin China, 13" Heavy Hi-Hat, 13" Dark Crisp Hi-Hat, 8", 10" & 12" Splash, 16" & 18" Fast Crash, 16" & 18" Power Crash.

- STEWART COPELAND

(The Police, Stanley Clarke)



" I am impressed by the dynamic range. I can play soft and bring out the actual beauty of the cymbal. I can play loud and it does not sound harsh but just like a big wall of sound. Usually you can not get both out of a cymbal."

Paiste Line: 20" Rough Ride, 20" Thin China, 17" Full Crash & Power Crash (for Hi-Hat), 20" Full Crash, 20" Mellow Ride.

- STEVE JORDAN
(Keith Richards, Session)

"Unbelievable! Gorgeous! It's got everything. This is the biggest cymbal innovation I've heard of in my lifetime. It's a cymbal revolution."

Paiste Line: 16" Fast Crash, 18" Full Crash, 10" Splash, 22" Full Ride, 20" Thin China. Sound Formula:14" Heavy Hi-Hat.

- JEFF PORCARO
(Toto, Session)

"I love the 'Signature' line because of the selection of sounds. I can use my usual sizes and change the model to adapt to each gig. My very favorite is the 10" Splash. With its richness and quickness, it speaks like my dog 'Sandy'!"

Paiste Line: 20" Full Ride, 16" Power Crash, 14" Full Crash, 10" Splash, 12" Heavy Hi-Hat, 14" Thin China.

- MARK CRANEY
(Gino Vanelli, Jethro Tull)

"They sound wonderful, really. These cymbals feel very natural and they speak immediately."

Paiste Line: 20" Dry Ride, 16" & 17" Full Crash, 13" Heavy Hi-Hat, 16" & 17" Fast Crash, 10" & 12" Splash, 16" Thin China.

- RICKY LAWSON
(Whitney Houston, Michael Jackson)

"These cymbals speak immediately, and have a brilliant shimmer at the very top end of the sound. I have never heard such beautifully rich sounding cymbals before."

Paiste Line: 20" Dry Ride, 13" Dark Crisp Hi-Hat, 16" Fast Crash, 12" Splash, 14", 16", 17" & 18" Full Crash. Cup Chimes: #5, #6.

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The new *Paiste* line was developed as an answer to the quest for the ultimate cymbal sound: one that is transparent yet dense, soft and yet strong, docile and yet energetic, a sense of sound that brings up old memories and new perceptions alike, a sound that is radically musical. It proved a goal so challenging that it took 8 years to invent an entirely new alloy to satisfy this sound goal.

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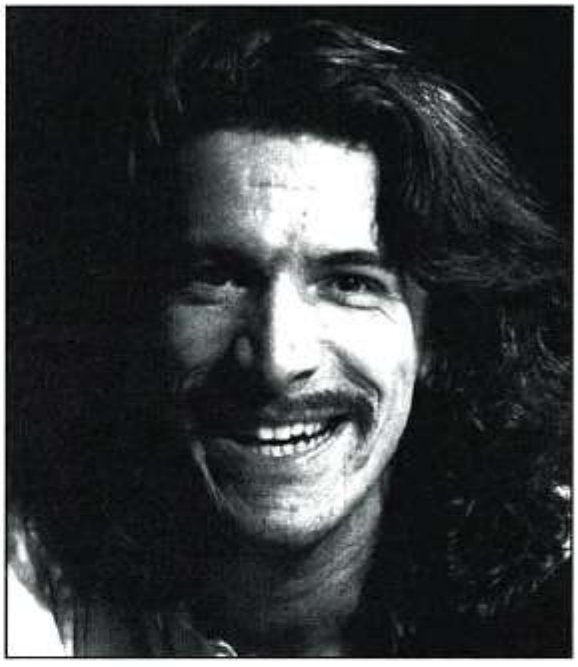
Paul van Wageningen
Dutch Master With A Global View

by Charles Levin



As *a* teenage drummer growing up in Amsterdam and raised mostly on jazz, Paul van Wageningen could not have imagined himself one of the first-call players in the San Francisco Bay Area for authentic Brazilian and Cuban styles—nor would he guess that he would some day be playing and recording with Bay Area musicians like Pete Escovedo, steel drummer Andy Narell, guitarist Ray Obeido, Narell guitarist Steve Erquiaga, and the Machete Ensemble. To these artists Paul brings a loping, smooth samba, an infectiously funky songo, a solid backbeat, and more.

On Narell's last album, *Little Secrets,* Paul's abilities as a multi-cultural drum stylist shine. But the album's title deceives. Paul's talents are no secret around the Bay Area. How Paul VW (just try saying "von-fog-eh-ning-un) became a "Dutch Master" of the world beat is a tribute to dedication, spontaneity, and decision-making in the right place at the right time.

Paul's fascination with music and drums began at home. His father was an avid photographer of American jazz musicians whose pictures of Charles Mingus and Sonny Rollins graced album covers. He took Paul to clubs and concerts at an early age (only possible because of the lack of age restrictions in Holland).

American jazz musicians like Ben Webster became occasional house guests. Michiel De Ruyter, a close friend of Paul's father and a leading jazz DJ for Dutch radio, possessed an enormous record collection—from which Paul's dad made tapes. One day, while listening to a Coltrane record featuring Elvin Jones, they noticed young Paul attempting to drum along. "It somehow grabbed me, I guess," says Paul.

The public schools in Holland had no band programs, so at the age of 12 Paul started taking private lessons with a local drummer. When he was 13, Paul's father took him to a Sunday afternoon session at the Bohemia Jazz Cafe in Amsterdam, where he was able to sit in with a band. "I was panic-stricken, of course," Paul says, laughing at the recollection. "I thought I was awful, but I started getting some work right away."

Moving along at a precocious speed, Paul was invited to make his first album at age 14—with saxophonist Hans Dulfer and former Focus guitarist Jan Akkerman. The recording was predominantly Latin/jazz.

"At that time I didn't know anything about that kind of music," says Paul. "One tune was one of those typical Cuban 6/8 grooves, and I'd never heard a rhythm like that before. I didn't know what to play. Here I am in the studio with these heavy guys who were much older than me, and they want to do this tune with a rhythm that I've never heard. But the bass player was real smart. He had played with me before and knew I was completely into Elvin Jones. He said to just play like Elvin."

The results were great. While critics praised the recording, *The Morning After The Third,* they didn't believe that Paul was only 14. They insisted that the recording could have stood on its own merits without the company's having to "exploit" his age.

In those early years, Paul's listening influences included local Dutch drummers Martin van Duynhoven, John Engles, and Han Bennink, as well as healthy doses of Elvin Jones. Besides jazz, Paul also immersed himself in Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, and James Brown.

"Ironically, I started listening to bands from here [East Bay] without realizing it," says Paul, "like Sly & the Family Stone, Larry Graham, Tower of Power, and all those Latin/rock bands like Azteca—which was really Coke Escovedo's band."

Through his high school years, Paul played with garage rock bands and jazz groups, and after graduation, he enrolled at the Amsterdam Conservatory to study with Jan Pustjens, percussionist with the Concertgebouw Orchestra. He also began playing gigs for American jazz musicians like trumpeter Art Farmer, pianist Tommy Flanagan, and trombonist Frank Rosolino—as well as doing local projects—and could not always make classes as a result. So he left school after two years and continued to gig around Amsterdam, as well as picking up a teaching job in the Dutch school system.

In 1976, Paul decided to take a one-month vacation in New York City, at the suggestion of Al Scotti, an American bass play-

er he was gigging with. "Man, I just went crazy in New York," says Paul. "I would pick up the *Village Voice,* and every day three of my favorites were playing somewhere." Though Paul hadn't planned on staying in New York, Scotti's Dutch girlfriend talked him into staying and trying his luck in the Big Apple.

Paul took anything he could—show gigs, cabaret jobs, off-Broadway musicals, a Top-40 gig at the Empire State Building—as long as it was music. Apart from a couple of lessons with Tony Williams and Freddie Waits, the highlight of this period was playing a short tour with the John Payne—Louis Levin Band, a fusion group out of Boston. With a record deal and a modest retainer, it was a step up from his previous gigs. After touring with them, Paul began to sub in the Broadway show *Let My People Come* in the fall of 1977. When an offer to go to San Francisco with a road production of the show came up, he took it.

Immediately upon arriving in San Francisco, the show's New York band began to jam with local musicians during off-hours. Amongst them was Berkeley-based keyboardist Steve Carter, who introduced Paul to several other musicians in the area, including the late Coke Escovedo. Introductions to keyboardist Mark Soskin and guitarist Ray Obiedo followed shortly. Then the show closed a week early and the band was stiffed on their last week's paychecks, as well as their plane tickets back to New York.

"Here I was in the Bay Area with no ticket back to New York," says Paul, "and these guys were telling me I should stay. I really liked the way they were playing. I could relate to it. It was fun."

So Paul decided to stay, and one gig led to the next. In Coke Escovedo's band he met Coke's brother Pete and Pete's daughter Sheila. From there, he began to play with Pete's band, Bill Summers' band, and Ray Obiedo's group, Kick, where he met Andy Narell. Paul looks back at the sound in most of those bands as a distinct Latin-oriented funk. "I feel like the East Bay sound is different from anywhere in the world," he says. "And it's still going on now. Oakland has a certain thing going for it. Some of that stuff still sounds great to me—like Tower of Power. To me, that's *real* Oakland."

Paul's move to the Bay Area stimulated a strong growth period and a desire to listen to the originators of the music he was now playing on gigs. Paul found himself listening to the drumming of Roberto Silva with Milton Nascimento, and Paulinho Braga with the late singer Elis Regina. By studying authentic Brazilian playing, he discovered the concept of partido alto—the rhythm that governs much samba playing, as the concept of clave does for Cuban music.

"When you play with Brazilians, it's a completely different thing than playing with Americans," says Paul. "With Americans, I have to play more like a jazz player playing a samba—which is not bad at all. But when you're playing with Brazilians, they have that partido alto rhythm that they are relating to all the time, with two sides like the Cuban clave. It has a certain feel, which I like to play because the samba starts to sound more authentic. You automatically start playing solid 8th notes on the ride cymbal, because the guitar and keyboards are stating the partido alto. It swings and takes on that character.

"You definitely have to study," Paul continues. "You have to listen to the guys who do it in Brazil. I started learning from playing it night after night—being with these people and assimilating it. I don't think I sound like a real Brazilian, but I try to come close."

Discovering songo—the groove that has enabled drumset players to be a more integral part of Cuban music ensembles—was a major turning point in Paul's career. It came to him from listening to Changuito—the timbale player from the Cuban band Los Van Van and the originator of songo. Paul has literally been obsessed with Changuito's playing for the last two years—especially after receiving a tape of the band made in Cuba with the mic' positioned right behind the drums.

"All you hear is cowbells and timbales, with the band in the background. Nobody else can listen to it," says Paul with a laugh, "but to me, it was the perfect mix. I would listen to it on a plane and people next to me would complain to the stewardesses because all they could hear were cowbells and drums coming from the headphones."

Referring to Changuito as the "Elvin Jones of Cuban music," Paul studied his ideas incessantly, at first finding them difficult to integrate because of the difference in setups. Changuito uses timbales, a bass drum, and a floor tom—as opposed to a conventional five-piece drumset. However, in time, Paul found

Paul van Wageningen Selected Discography

Andy Narell
Light In Your Eyes (Hip Pocket Records HP-103)
The Hammer (Windham Hill Jazz WH-107)
Little Secrets (Windham Hill Jazz WH-0120)

Ray Obiedo
Perfect Crime (Windham Hill Jazz WH-0115)
Iguana (Windham Hill Jazz WH-0128)

Steve Erquiaga
Erkiology (Windham Hill Jazz WH-0127)

Pete Escovedo
The Island (Esgo EG-001)
Yesterday's Memories,
Tomorrow's Dreams (Esgo EG-002)
Mr. E (Concord Jazz CR-5005)

Bill Summers
Call It What You Want (MCA MCA-5176)
On Sunshine (Prestige P10107)

the ideas seeping into his style and inspiring his own creativity—with Cuban playing as well as other musical idioms.

His main outlet for this has been the Machete Ensemble, a Bay Area group led by percussionist John Santos and devoted to Afro-Latin jazz. The group features former Santana percussionist Orestes Vilato. "Orestes is a master," Paul says. "Playing in that band, I learn so much—not only from Orestes, but from John Santos too."

Santos has nothing but compliments for Paul's contribution to the group: "When Paul joined, he didn't have a great deal of experience in the authentic Afro-Cuban style. But because he's superfast, learns rhythms immediately, and then makes up his own thing with them, he became an excellent drummer in this style. He's spoiled me. I'm hard-pressed to find a sub now, so I cancel gigs if he's not available."

It wasn't until his experience with the Machete Ensemble that Paul was confronted with a *real* appreciation for the importance of clave. "Clave was a little bit of a mystery for me," says Paul. "I would hear people talk about it as some kind of religious thing."

While Paul was familiar with clave in its two-three format from working with Pete Escovedo's band, he never had to play from the other side: three-two. Because Pete's band was more of a pop/Latin/funk sound, it never strayed from the two-three format. Using a modernized approach to traditional Afro-Latin folkloric styles, adherence to the clave formats was imperative in Machete's music.

Paul admits that dealing with the basic 6/8 Afro-Cuban patterns was a whole new ball game. "I never thought of 6/8 as being in clave and capable of being turned around also," says Paul. "I always thought of it as some kind of rhythm, but never in terms of clave. Starting 6/8 from the other side was difficult at first. After doing fills I would inadvertently turn myself around."

Santos praises Paul's versatility and adaptability to be able to blend and support a player like Orestes. "Orestes is spontaneous and unpredictable," says Santos. "Yet Paul is never clashing with him. He has an equilibrium where he's real transparent and real solid at the same time."

Working with Andy Narell allows Paul to really show his multi-cultural chops. Paul had known and played with Andy since arriving in the Bay Area. He recorded Ray Obiedo's tune "La Samba" on Andy's *Light In Your Eyes* LP in 1983. When William Kennedy decided to vacate the drum chair in Andy's band to move on to the Yellowjackets, Paul was the logical choice for the job.

"He allows me to be specific about playing in a real authentic way," says Narell. "Paul's a true student of different world styles, such as Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, calypso, or soca [the contemporary calypso sound of Trinidad]."

Even though many of Narell's compositions reflect more than one style, the writing always emphasizes understanding each idiom from its authentic origins. Narell sees Paul's ability to bring authenticity to his compositional style as an important asset. With rare exceptions, Paul gets free rein in creating parts.

The tunes of *Little Secrets* demon-

strate Paul's musical encyclopedia of world drumming styles. "Armchair Psychology" flows quite naturally from funk cha-cha, to a half-time funk backbeat, to songo, and finally to soca. "Little Secrets" moves between reggae (including a 5/4 section) and a partido alto for the head, then shifts to a gentle samba for the solo sections.

When it comes to equipment, Paul uses a Yamaha *Recording Custom Series* drumkit with a 14x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 10x12 rack toms, and a suspended 12x14 "floor" tom. On the toms, he uses either clear *Emperors* or *Pinstripes* on top with clear *Diplomats* on the bottom. On the kick he's got a *Pinstripe* with a blanket inside for a little muffling. Paul's snare collection includes a Yamaha brass-shell piccolo, a Remo piccolo that he used for *Little Secrets,* and a Sonor *HiLite,* all with coated *Ambassadors* on top. His *Paiste* "Signature" cymbals include a 20" *Sound Creation Dark Ride,* along with a 17" *Full Crash,* a 14" *Fast Crash,* a 10" splash, and 14" medium hi-hats.

For Erquiaga's band, which does not include a percussionist, Paul augments his setup with an Akai *S900* sampler that he plays from a Roland *Octapad* for percussion sounds.

The future looks bright as Paul gets more recognition beyond the Bay Area. Narell's gigs take him all over the country—and frequently to the Caribbean, to play music festivals in Martinique, Guadalupe, Puerto Rico, and Curacao. His visibility has been further increased by Obiedo's *Iguana* album, which made the Top-10 of the *Billboard* Contemporary Jazz Charts, and Erquiaga's *Erkiology,* which reached number four on the Gavin jazz report, the industry standard for radio airplay.

At 36, Paul has achieved a degree of success that is not easy to come by—a result of perseverance and dedication. "You almost have to be obsessed in this business," says Paul. "There are so many hassles you have to deal with to be a musician. If you really want to pursue it, you have to do it all the way."

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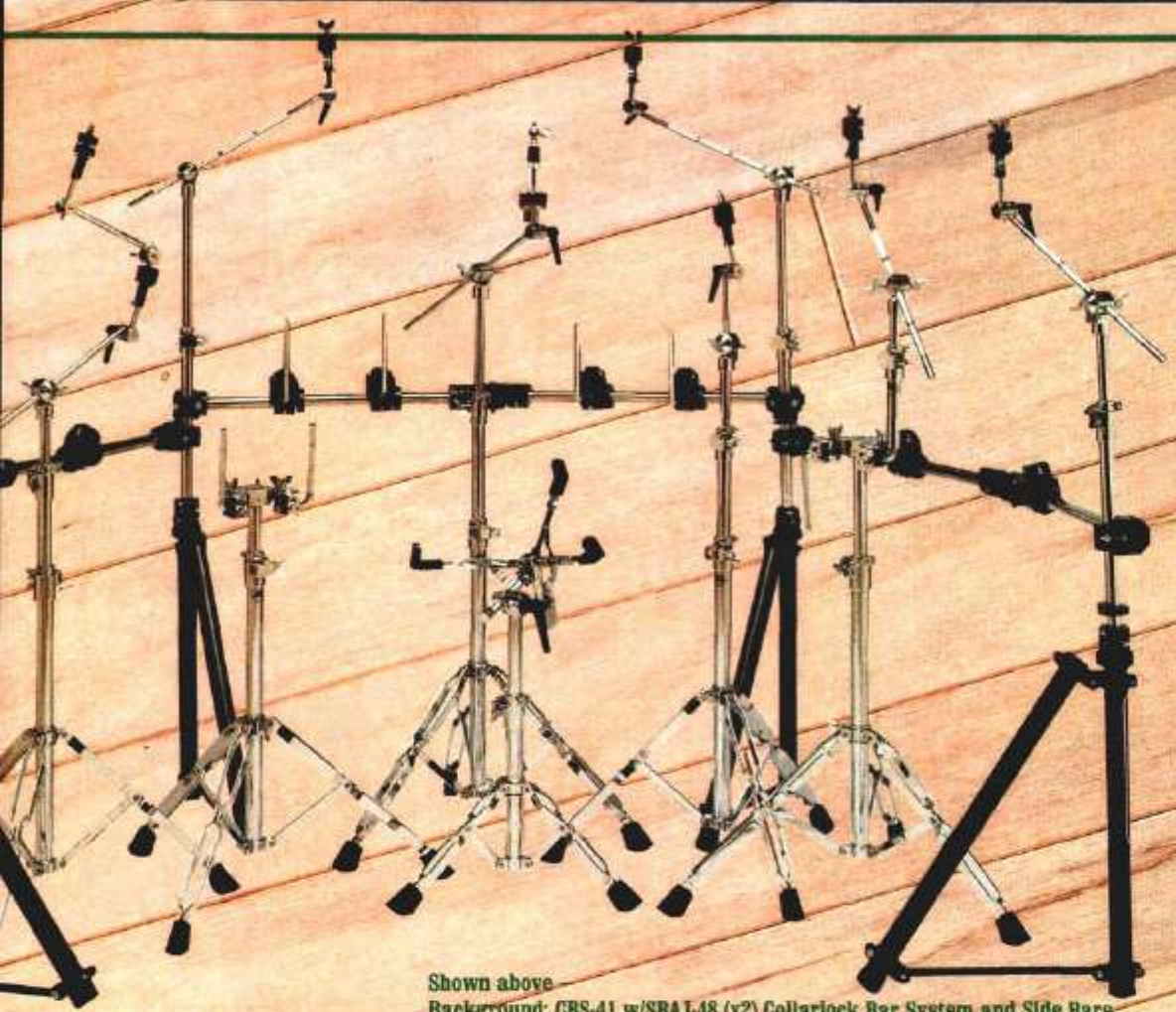

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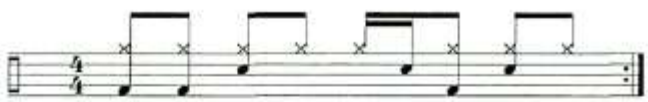
Alternative Funk-Rock

by Rodney Ledbetter

The funk grooves that are presented in this article are in more of an "alternative funk-rock" approach, which has been popularized by the likes of Fishbone, Royal Crescent Mob, Urban Dance Squad, and 24-7 Spyz. Many of these grooves and feels originated from pre-disco era music popularized by George Clinton and James Brown. Let's face it, if it weren't for them, where would popular music be today? Although the '70s got a bad rap as far as pop music goes, much of the music presented in that decade was the most creative in music history.

Most of these grooves are characteristic of a driving 8th-note hi-hat and/or an open and closed off-beat hi-hat. Though there is an underlying backbeat, most of them contain a somewhat busy yet subdivided pattern between the bass drum and snare drum. Credit should go to Carlton Smith, Fish, Magic Stick, and Anthony Johnson for the grooves they have come up with.

The first example is taken from Royal Crescent Mob's *Midnight Roses.* On "Ramblin," there's a very relaxed groove that should be played at about 100 beats per minute.



This example is also taken from *Midnight Roses.* The groove, from the song "I'm Sayin'," is a little faster than the last one and should be played at about 132 beats per minute.

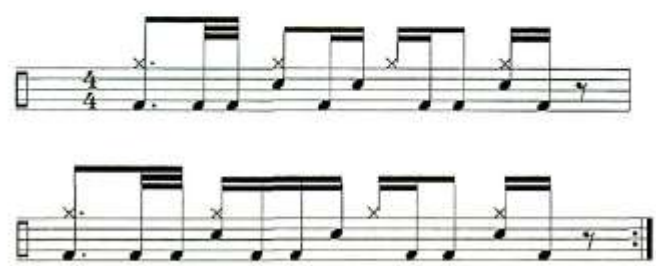
This example is taken from Urban Dance Squad's 1990 release, *Mental Floss For The Globe.* "Big Apple" has a relaxed groove, and should be played at about 88 beats per minute.

Fishbone is quickly becoming one of the most popular alternative funk bands today. "So Many Millions," from their album *The Reality OfMy Surroundings,* has a very interesting groove that utilizes a two-bar phrase played with a triplet feel. It should be played at about 92 beats per minute.

"Behavior Control Technician" is taken from *Surroundings* as well. It is very driving and should be played at about 104 beats per minute. The snare part in parentheses is only played at the end of the four-bar phrase.

The last example from *Surroundings* is called "Nar-Tee May'en," and should be played utilizing straight 16th notes at a tempo of 112 beats per minute.

24-7 Spyz is a very diverse band that has emerged in the past few years. "Dude U Knew," from *Gumbo Millennium,* has a very interesting chorus groove and utilizes quarter-note hi-hats. It should be played at about 88 beats per minute and has a triplet feel.



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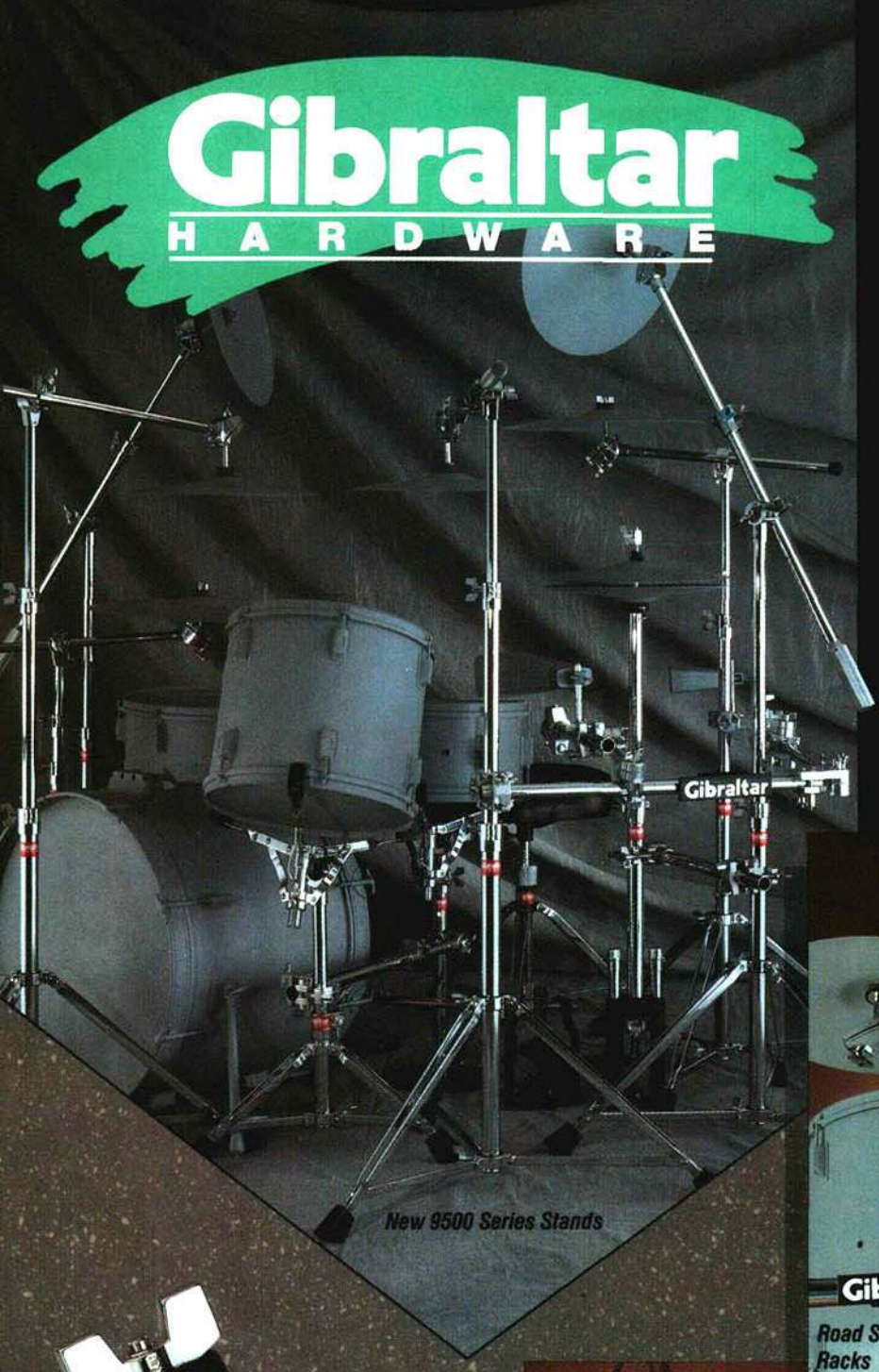

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Tales From The Soviet Union

by Matt North

Last semester, I toured the Soviet Union as a drummer with the University of Illinois Jazz Band. For 33 days, we gave concerts in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Donetsk, and Sochi. Touring the U.S.S.R. turned out to be more of an education than a vacation, and I realize now how fortunate I am to be a drummer from America. You think it's a struggle to make a living in a music career? Well, just imagine trying to do it in Russia. You think you've had the blues? Before I witnessed the Soviet Union, I thought I did too. I was mistaken.

A great deal of my time had been spent brooding over how difficult my life might be if I relied on music as my only source of income. I don't think that way anymore. Now I'm grateful to live in a country where I'm free to choose whatever career path my heart desires. In the Soviet Union, people aren't that fortunate. Musicians rarely have access to the simplest things their hearts desire, like equipment, instruction, recording, and three square meals a day.

A few of my most memorable adventures were waiting in line for four hours to get into the Moscow McDonalds, living on bread and water for six days in Leningrad, eating Chicken Kiev in Kiev, and being swarmed by screaming Soviet teenagers after a performance, as if I were a member of New Kids On The Block! Those poor Russians. I felt so sorry for them. How were they to know we were only a midwestern college jazz band, no better or worse than most college jazz bands? Though I must confess, I thoroughly enjoyed being bombarded with flowers after concerts, signing autographs, posing for pictures, and making friends with some of the warmest individuals in each city. I doubt that any college jazz band has ever received that much notoriety in America.

Most of the Soviet musicians I met seemed to be completely shut off from the rest of the world, and they thrived on whatever knowledge we could share with them. I tried to explain that I once majored in drumset. "College students are allowed to study drums in America?" they asked in disbelief. "Really? It is great. It is comical!"

I strongly encourage anyone searching for inspiration, dealing with confusion about a music career, lacking motivation, or simply needing a boost, to stop and think about the musicians in this world who play just for the sake of playing. The Soviet musicians I ran across played for the genuine love of music and of their instrument. The players I met were committed to the art of making music—not money. Furthermore, most of the Soviet musicians I encountered had never even heard of the "music business." For those who could grasp the concept of a free market society, the thought of "business" was only a dream. Music was their love, their passion, their escape.

I had no idea how much I took for granted as an American drummer. Today, Soviet drummers must carefully look after whatever equipment they're fortunate enough to have. If anything breaks or wears out, they wait two or three months for a replacement. That is, if they can afford it. In short, music stores are very sparse. Of the shops I visited, I saw no drumheads, no pedals, no brushes, no more than three poor-quality cymbals, and sticks so thin it would take a miracle for them to last one set.

In addition, recordings are scarce in the Soviet Union. From what I could gather, musicians lived off of three or four albums. They had never heard of Peter Erskine, Omar Hakim, Vinnie Colaiuta, Sonny Emory, Kenny Aronoff, or anyone else I mentioned. In an attempt to spread the word, I gave away quite a few of my tapes to Soviet drummer friends. You should have seen the looks on their faces when they heard Kenny Aronoff playing "Lonely Ol' Night." I told them that in America, we say his snare drum sounds like a Civil War cannon! They ate that up.

As a college drummer considering a career in music, I'd naturally heard the horror stories about life on the road. I'd heard of the fatigue, the loneliness, the late nights, and the burnout. But think about this. There's no such thing as a rest stop in Russia—just a lot of bushes and trees. Rarely did we ever get a chance to use hot water, take showers, or drink the water without risking illness. During the course of the tour I lost 12 lbs, and to this day I'm amazed we made it through without eating. A setting like that can make 14-hour bus rides seem like an eternity. It was a true adventure.

In Leningrad, we played three consecutive nights in the city's

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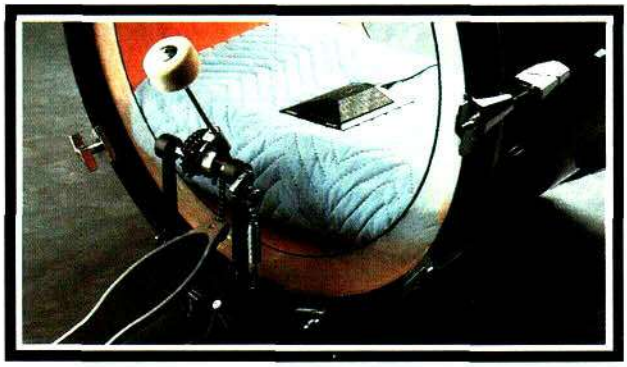

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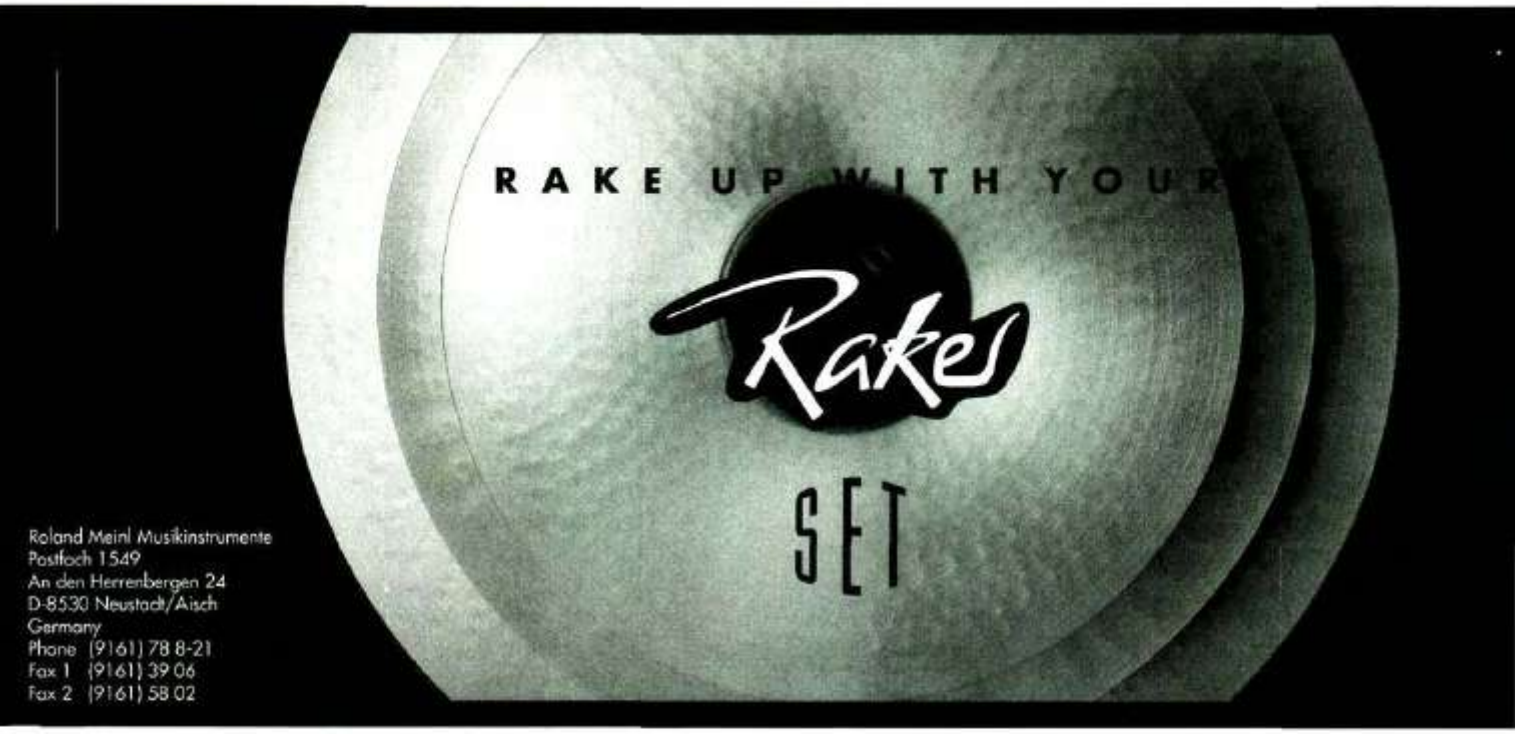

number-one jazz club. I had never seen any place like this before in my life. The walls were adorned with enlarged black and white posters of American jazz legends, while the rest of the decor had an intimate feeling with candlelit tables positioned around the floor. During our performance, we were so close to the audience, we could actually make eye contact with them, watch their expressions, smile at them, and see them smiling back.

On opening night, I met an extraordinary young man. His name was Nikita and he was a teacher of English at Leningrad University. While we played, Nikita would bop up and down in his chair, sway back and forth, wave his arms, whistle, and encourage the rest of the crowd to cheer louder. Nikita came back night after night, and each time he sat at the table right next to the stage, as close to the drums as possible. The stage was only a foot or so off the ground, so Nikita and I could exchange words between songs. "Bravo, bravo, my American friend," he shouted. "You play like Buddy Rich," who happened to be the only American drummer Nikita knew.

At the beginning of each set, Nikita would put a glass of cognac on the stage next to my floor tom so I wouldn't go dry. I don't drink, but I quickly learned that if a Russian offers you a drink—you drink! Each night after the gig, Nikita and I would sit at the table together, talk, and finish whatever was left of the cognac. I have a clear picture in my mind of the last time Nikita and I talked. I remember him leaning over to me, staring me straight in the eyes, and saying, "All my life I dream of meeting an American jazz drummer. To hear the sound. To see the attack. It thrills me. When I was little boy, I ask my parents for drums. Never did I get them. Soon I learn that I can only dream of drums. To see a drum in Leningrad is rare. So sad. You, my American friend, are my hero drummer." Then he paused, let out a deep sigh, gave me another cold stare, and said, "If there is difficult way to do something, then that is how they do it in Russia!" Nikita was an unbelievable spirit and a true intellectual. I'll never forget him.

> "The players I met were committed to the art of making music—not money."

In Moscow, the last stop of the tour, we played three dual concerts with the Oleg Lundstrem Big Band, Russia's most famous big band. They are an incredible band with two fantastic drummers named Ivan and Vova. Ivan has held the drum chair for 25 years, while Vova is the young, ambitious upstart. Both of them are incredible technicians with chops like you wouldn't believe. They live, eat, and breathe drums. Ivan spoke good broken English, while Vova only knew a few words. Vova and I would communicate with facial expressions, or we would use Ivan as our interpreter.

"Matt," Ivan would say to me, "it must be so simple to make living as American drummer. Practice much? Get much gigs? Have much fame? Yes?" "In America," I explained, "it is not difficult to get in a band and play gigs. But very few American drummers become famous, let alone rich. Even the famous ones have trouble making money sometimes."

"Well, it is the same in Russia, but much more problem than in America," said Ivan. "I must compete with Vova to buy new sticks at the music shop before he does. Sometimes we wait maybe three or four months for new heads and sticks. To me,

Michael Witzel
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looking at your cymbals is what walking on Red Square must be like for you. I dream of someday to see a true American drum shop. Is it true that the drum shop attendant gives you a stick and allows you to walk through a jungle of cymbals? Can you hit any cymbal you wish? It must be beautiful. Our music shops have maybe two or three cymbals. Very bad. I do not think you know how happy Vova and I are to touch your cymbals. They bring us tears. Do American drummers have their own drumsets, or do they share like Vova and me?" "Some share," I replied. That was all I had the heart to tell him.

Both Ivan and Vova desperately wanted to trade whatever they could for my equipment. Ivan even offered to trade his family Bible for my ride cymbal. The Bible had passed through eight generations of his family, and he was willing to trade it for a cymbal! It disturbed me not to grant their wishes, but I did leave them everything I could stand to part with, like sticks, heads, brushes, cowbells, magazines, and T-shirts.

As I said earlier, we played three dual concerts with the Oleg Lundstrem Band. Each night, we brought the house down with a legendary chart arranged for two bands entitled "Battle Royale." As you may already know, the song ends with a battle of the drummers. There I was on opening night, a 20-year old college drummer matched against Russia's nationally renowned 25-year veteran, "Ivan The Terrible."

Ivan was a broad-shouldered, assertive individual who carried an air of professionalism in his every move. On top of that, he craved drum solos. I was a much less experienced, passive drummer who preferred laying back, keeping time, and letting the rest of the band solo. Ivan had been told two months in advance to be prepared to battle a young American drummer from a famous American jazz band. I, however, only found out we were closing the show with "Battle Royale" that morning when we got off the plane at Moscow International Airport. To make things worse, that afternoon we only rehearsed the tune for fifteen minutes.

That evening, the stage was set for tension. Ivan was eager to devour me, while I was eager for the concert to be over so I could race back to my hotel and hide under the bed! When we actually performed the tune, Ivan got so excited he seemed to make the entire tune a drum solo. In the midst of the cluttered, percussive commotion, it all got very confusing. I decided to play a simple, deliberate groove with a heavy backbeat hoping to at least hold my side of the stage together. Ivan, however, was at a completely different tempo, and when it was time for him to begin his half of the drum battle, there was absolutely no time between the two of us. He was playing so fast, I felt no pulse, no meter. Nothing flowed. All I heard was a jumbled mess of notes getting faster and faster!

Frantically, I leaned over as far as I could and screamed, "You are not playing in time! It's not steady. You're rushing. You are RUSHING!!" Ivan gave me a bewildered look, drew a blank stare, and then suddenly released a stage-rattling laugh and yelled back, "Yes, and you are American!" "No," I tried to tell him. "Not Russian. You are rushing. Rushinnggg!!"

Before I went to Russia, I used to fret over choosing a major—most Soviets fret over where their next meal will come from. I used to complain about late-night gigs in smoke-filled, half-empty clubs. I used to loathe watching other musicians nonchalantly throw their axes over their shoulder and leave while I lugged my kit around. I'd often shrug when I was handed a couple of bucks for three hours of hard work, or a $35 fee for sticks and heads. Now I'm grateful to at least have my own drumset to lug around, and to have gigs that pay enough to let me buy a meal I don't have to wait in line for three hours to receive. And at the very least, I will never have to wait two or three months to buy drumheads or a simple pair of sticks.

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Pat O'Donnell:
Taking It To The Road

by Stephanie Renzo Bennett

What's it like for a musician who's used to pounding out a living in the city to suddenly pull up stakes and take to the road? Will the constant flow of calls start up again if he takes an extended tour? Will life's daily minutiae take care of themselves if no one is home for four months? What are the pros and the cons? Drummer/percussionist Pat O'Donnell found out last year when he answered a call from a New York City contractor's office to go out for four months with the national tour of the Broadway production of Chess.

As a busy Broadway percussionist, subbing regularly for many shows including Phantom Of The Opera, Dreamgirls, Starlight Express, Les Miserables, Chess, *and* Cats, *O'Donnell has spent the last several years building up his reputation and garnering high regard among his peers for his skillful playing. He was content to be a regular sub on the Broadway scene, supplementing his income with a position as a music teacher at St. Joseph School for the Blind in Jersey City, and holding down the drum chair with a ten-piece show band called Boulevard East. When the offer came to tour, it was sudden. Pat found there were many details to consider, with virtually minutes to make a decision. The following interview discusses the results of his decision, and the way one musician dealt with the newness of his first extended tour.*

SB: How did you feel when you first received the call from the show's contractor to go on the road?

PO: I was surprised, and I had to give them an answer immediately, so I had a lot of thinking to do very quickly.

SB: You mentioned your ambivalent feelings about how a lengthy tour might affect your future work. Did you worry that you'd lose that first- and second-call status?

PO: I thought about it, and yes, I made some calls. It's interesting, though, because I found that most of the guys that I work for are honorable. It's taken a while to get established, and they know that. The people I sub for most frequently assured me that they were going to use me when I got back. I've been really lucky in terms of the people I've hooked up with in that it seems to be more of a long-term relationship.

SB: How did you know what to take along? Especially the little mundane things—like did you pack your entire wardrobe?

PO: [Chuckling] Well, I brought a little more than I should have, but luckily I had a day off and brought some stuff home. After lugging around a suitcase of things, I quickly learned to prioritize what was important to bring, and what was necessary...in terms of the lifestyle. I'm sure it's different for every person, but ideally if you can do the whole tour with one suitcase, that's best.

SB: When the tour finally began, what did you do with your days? The shows were at night, and living in a hotel room has to be a little boring.

PO: Well, I went out with the intention of writing music, so I brought a great amount of baggage, with a keyboard, a four-track recorder, a drum machine—so I wasn't bored. I also did a lot of sightseeing. The thing to remember when you're planning this is that whatever you bring, you have to carry. It's your own responsibility to lug it around.

SB: Let's talk about the show itself. Did you have the charts ahead of time?

PO: The first time I saw the book was in Florida. It was handed out at the first rehearsal.

SB: Was it a difficult book? Did it require you to stretch any aspect of your playing or reading?

PO: The arranger of the show was a really top-notch arranger, Dan Troob. There were particular things, like a march and certain hits, that he really wanted to be expressive. Working with KAT's *MalletKAT* (mallet MIDI controller) to the extent that I did stretched me a bit. It was a challenge in the beginning.

SB: How did you prepare for the gig? Did you go to music school or take formal lessons?

PO: Oh, yeah. I graduated from Jersey City State College in New Jersey in 1982, and I earned my masters at Manhattan School of Music in 1984.

SB: Part of the requirement for the show was the ability to

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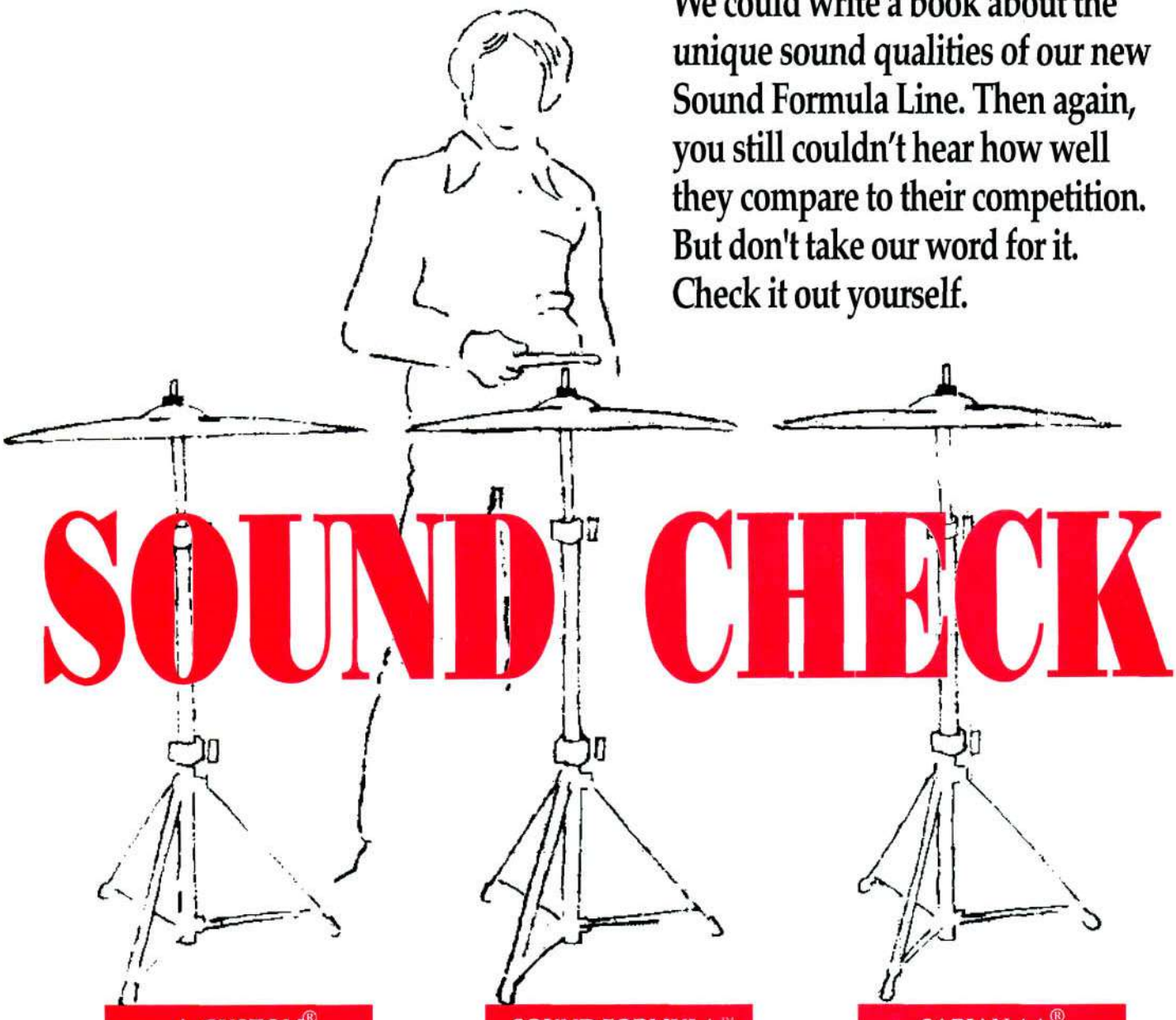

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become totally at ease with the KAT. These kinds of electronics were not available when you attended college. How did you prepare for working with the KAT, and especially on such short notice?

PO: I had the advantage of having subbed on the Broadway version of *Chess,* which used the KAT, though not in as extensive a way as we did on the road. The road version used a lot of electronic sounds to enhance the dance numbers. It was also used to enhance what the drummer was doing, like added snare drums, metal pipes, hand claps.... The interesting thing about having three octaves worth of sounds is that once you had a sample, you could really create unlimited sounds.

SB: Did you own the KAT before you brought it on the road, or was one made available to you?

PO: Ah, this was one of the best parts. When I found out what equipment was needed, I went to Carroll Music in New York City to pick everything out. The production company rented everything for me, but it was *my* responsibility to pick it all out and have it sent to the first stop. I could've just called Carroll's and they would have sent me whatever I wanted, but I wanted to see what I was getting. Imagine needing a snare drum and having a thousand to pick from. A large rental company such as Carroll's enables you to get the right instrument for the job.

First I picked out my timpani. Knowing that the book really called for three drums, but due to space I would be using two, I was sure to pick out 26" and 29" copper extended-collar Ludwig *Standard* model timpani. I spent a good couple of hours picking out the equipment.

SB: What kinds of considerations were you making in your choices?

PO: Well, first I had to make sure the instruments met the needs of the flavor of the show. Next, I determined whether or not they would actually hold up for four to six months of abuse. Finally, I thought about living with each particular instrument for eight shows a week. I was sure to play, shake, hit, and pull them, because once you're out of the New York City area, it can be quite difficult to find most of the instruments I needed.

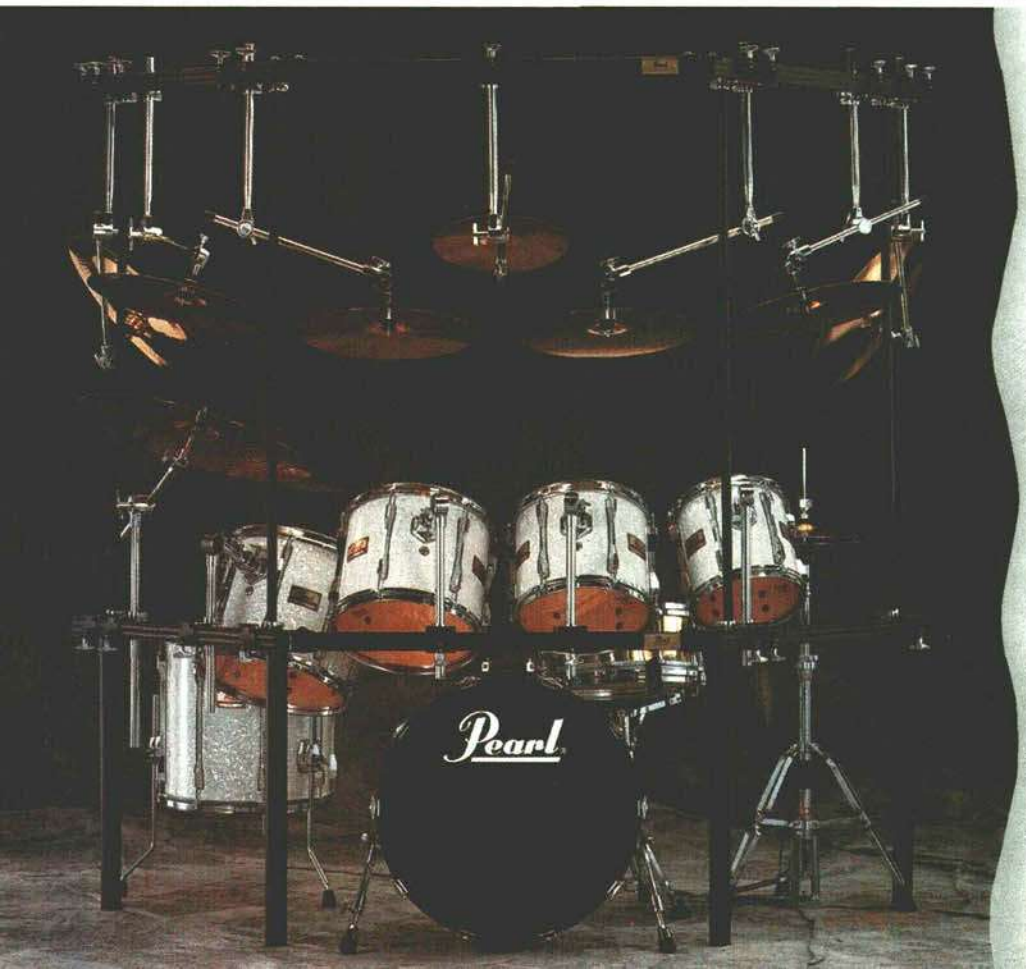
SB: How did you determine what sounds you would be reproducing on the KAT?

PO: The sounds that we used were basically acoustic instruments that were meant to be used as acoustic instruments on this kind of setup. From our KAT controller we had access to the following sounds: two full octaves of chimes; three full octaves of xylophone; three full octaves of orchestra bells; hand claps; three full octaves of marimba; electronic drum sounds, which included a full electronic drum kit, including six chromatic metal pipes, four ascending snare drums, and ascending sounding hand claps; an octave worth of gong; and a keyboard split for the prologue—the bottom octave being chimes, the center a wood block and gongs, and the upper xylophone.

SB: So basically the percussion chair was almost completely KAT?

PO: KAT and timpani.

SB: If the KAT sounds are so incredible, why did you have to lug



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along the most cumbersome drums of all, the timpani?

PO: Some people may disagree with me, but as far as orchestral sound, I think the sound is *made* by the timpani. You can get a good strike sample, but to get that orchestral roll.... It's hard to get a human sound from an electronic timpani sample. The pitch thing is very important. The whole system of timpani playing is based on harmonics, making the head vibrate and having the tension just right so that you blend with the orchestra. So, if you have something that is so fixed in terms of the pitch, well, it doesn't work. You just miss the human element too much.

SB: So, what's the verdict, can you make more money on the road than in the city, or is it a draw?

PO: My idea was to make money, so I made money. I found a roommate, we split the expenses, and I made good money. It worked out well.

SB: When you finally got on the bus and left, were there any adjustments to make during the first week?

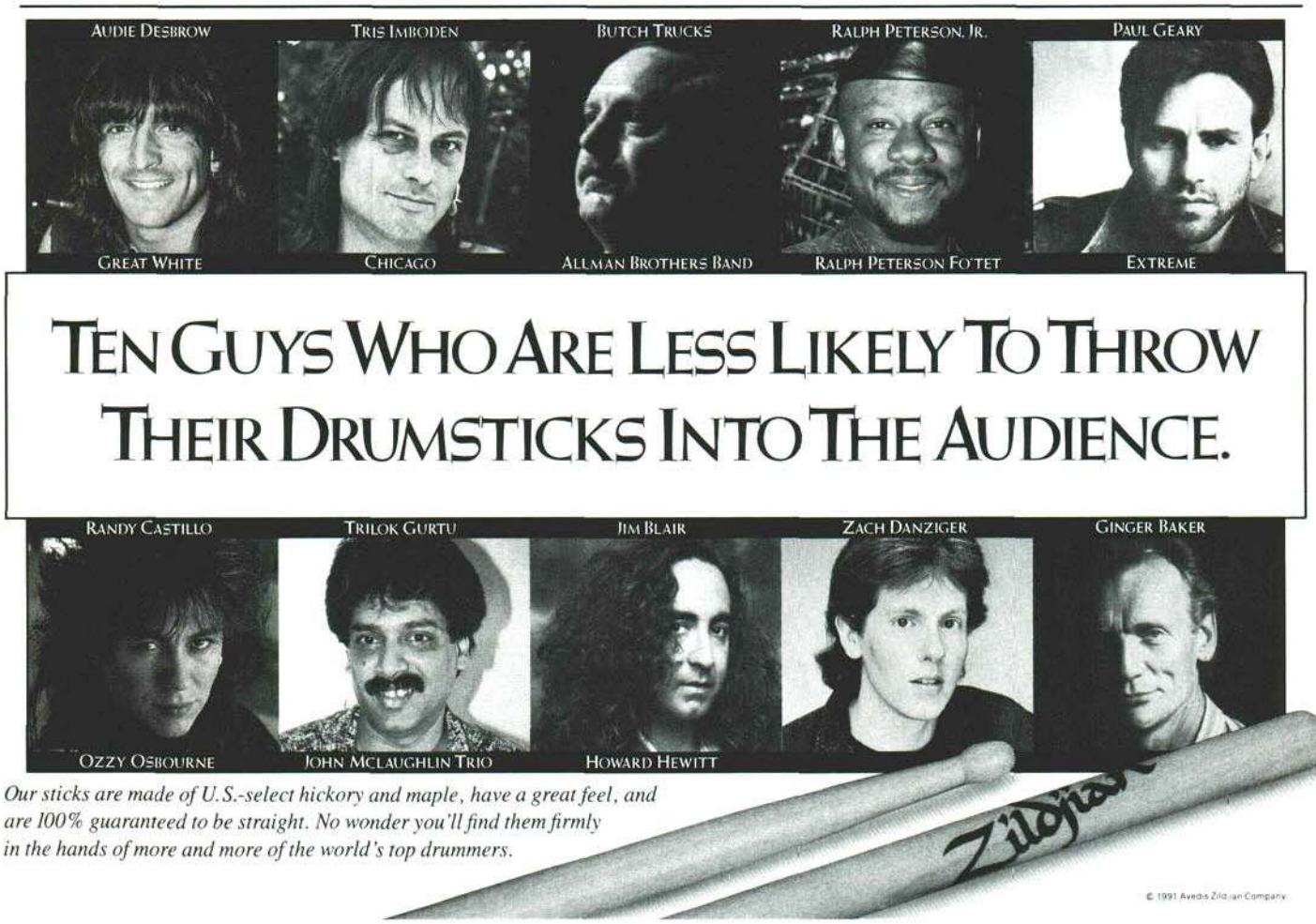
PO: Socially it's a funny kind of thing if you've never done that before. You fly into a strange city, you check into a hotel...it takes a little getting used to finding things and getting acclimated to the area—you know, scoping out where you're going to eat, what you're going to do. That's an important thing, you know. I learned right away that if you're going to eat in the hotel all the time, you're gonna spend big bucks.

My initial check-in in Miami, our first stop, was kind of strange. The rooms were rather expensive, and I didn't have a roommate. The expense money for traveling musicians is above your salary, and it's a help, but it wouldn't cover seven nights of single rooms and meals. When I first got to Miami I saw how quickly my per diem ran out, so I knew I just had to get a roommate. I really wanted the per diem to be used for what it was meant for.

SB: Having been through it, would you do it again?

PO: I'd do it again, but not back to back. I like the idea of having some stability with where I live. Plus, I think it's important to keep on being busy in New York City. On a personal level, the tour gave me a chance to see parts of the country I never would have visited. Musically, it enabled me to become much more familiar with the electronics, and although all gigs and opportunities are different, I would definitely work with the people that were involved with *Chess* again. I especially enjoyed meeting so many different drummers and percussionists in the different towns.

I was also fortunate to have the keyboard and music to keep me busy on days off. It was a good combination between much-needed rest and lots of hard work. A road gig with a top-flight organization is a good way to get some perspective on the type of work you're doing and the type of work you'd like to do. That's something that's really hard to do in the fast-paced scene of New York. Yeah, I'd do it again.



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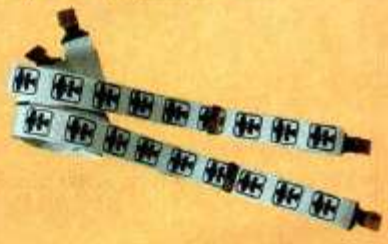

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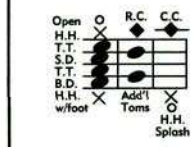

This month's *Drum Soloist* features the incomparable Vinnie Colaiuta from the CD *Los Lobotomys,* which also has Carlos Vega and Jeff Porcaro on it. On this particular track, Vinnie trades eights at the end of the tune, and what he plays is nothing short of amazing. There are a lot of great licks on this one.

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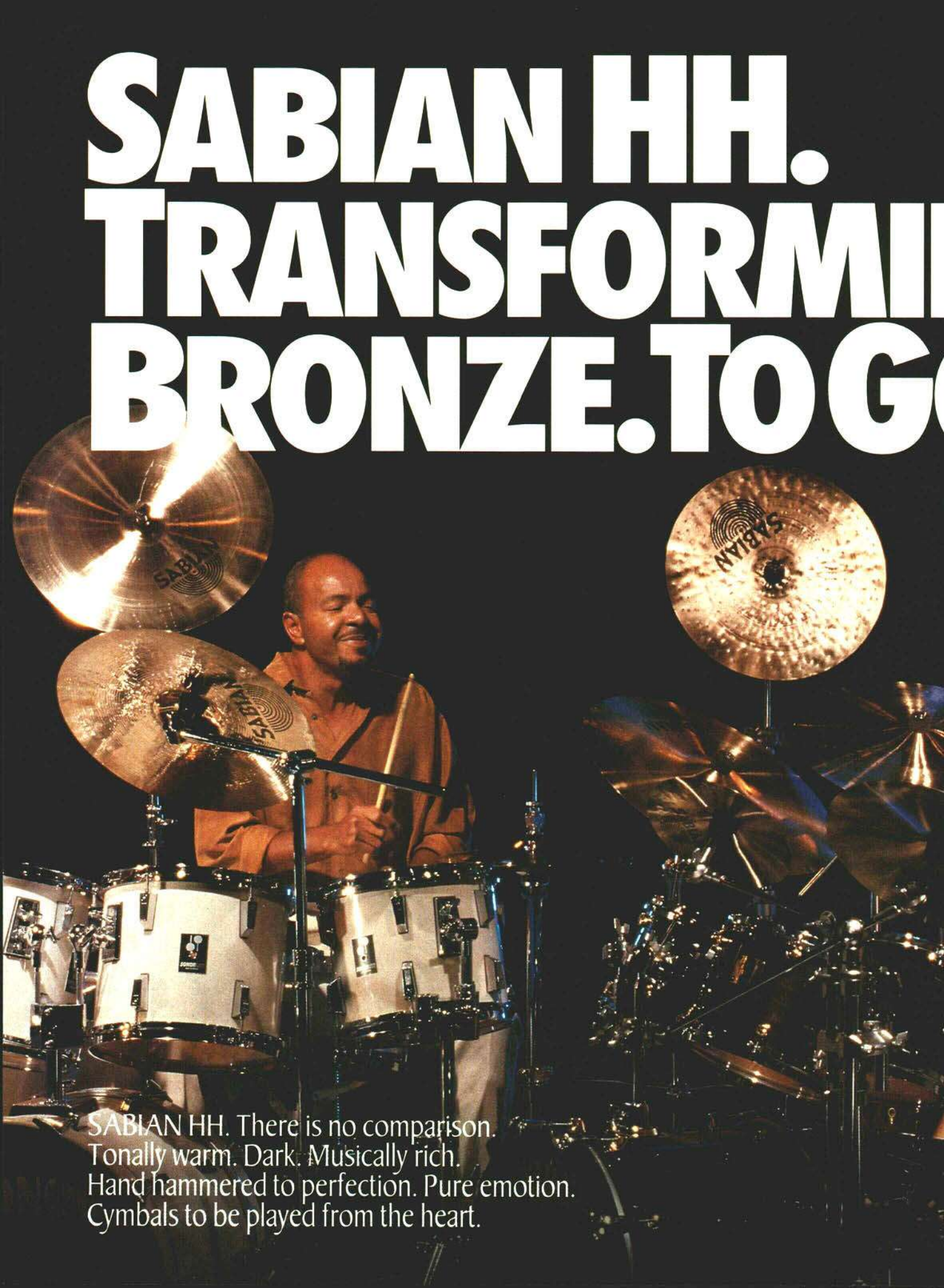

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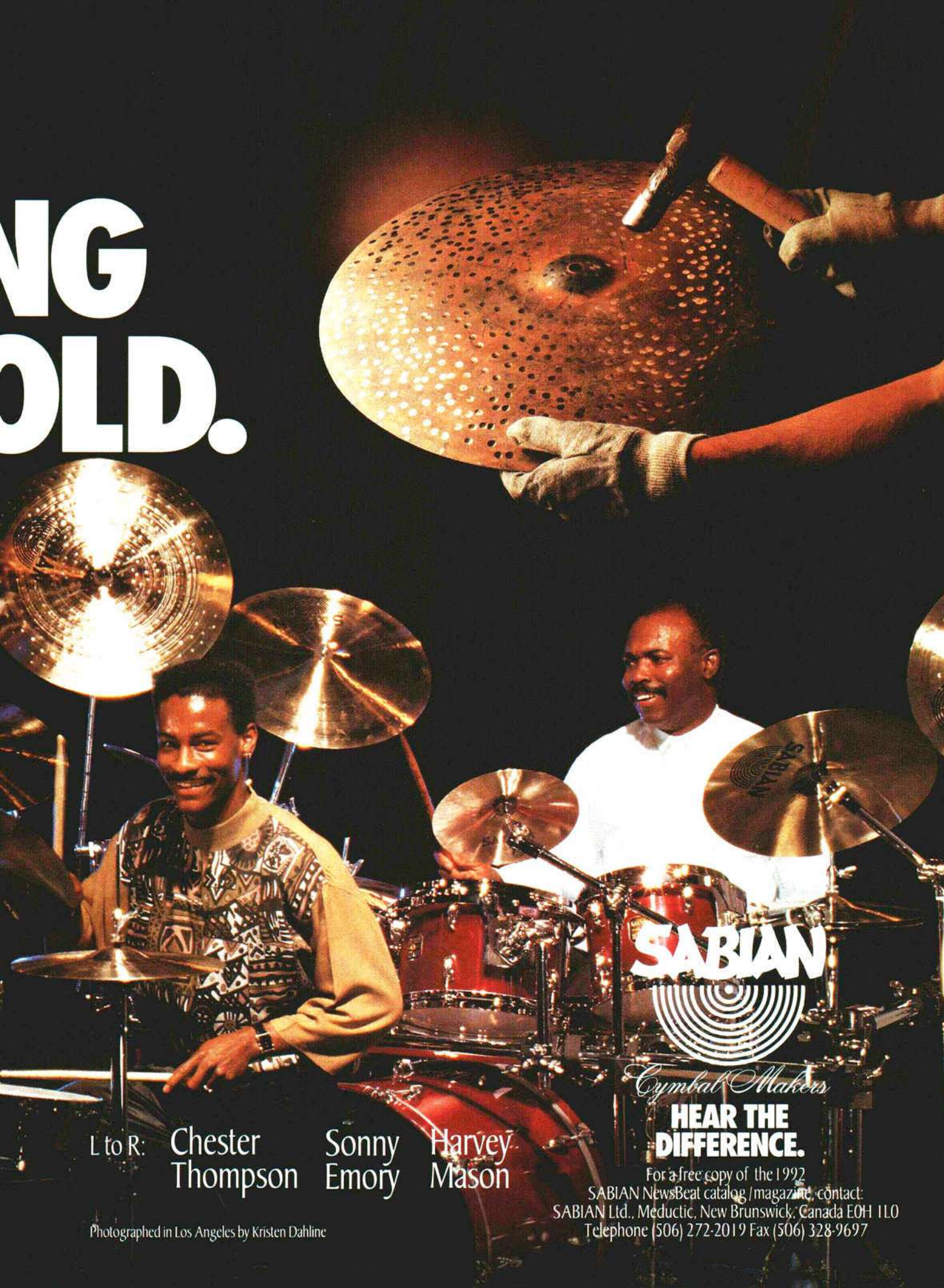
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Spencer Dryden; Surrealistic Pillow

by Robert Santelli

Although the roots of acid rock and the liberating spirit of Bay Area hippies were already firmly in place by 1967, it wasn't until that year that the rest of the world caught on to what this "revolution" was all about. The album that uncorked all this new energy and excitement was Surrealistic Pillow, *the Jefferson Airplane's second album.*

Surrealistic Pillow *was able to achieve what previous Bay Area rock albums couldn't: large-scale commercial success. Two songs off the album, "Somebody To Love" and "White Rabbit," became Top-10 singles. The former song, a wailing, psychedelic call for a new type of love and affection, proved that acid rock could confront traditional pop parameters and simply push through them, while "White Rabbit," with its famous lyrical phrase, "Feed your head," detailed the Alice in Wonderland-like dimensions of acid rock.*

A few months before the Airplane began recording Surrealistic Pillow, *its original drummer, Skip Spence, left the group and went to Mexico. (He later returned to the Bay Area and formed the band Moby Grape.) Spencer Dryden, a promising jazz/rock session drummer from L.A., replaced him. Dryden, a far more skilled drummer than Spence, possessed a sharpened sense of time and a penchant to play the right fill at the right time. Along with providing a steady rhythmic base so the band could explore the depths of its striking mix of rock, blues, folk, and psychedelia, Dryden helped give the Airplane the aggressive punch that was missing on its debut album,* Jefferson Airplane Takes Off.

RS: You joined the Airplane about six months before they began recording *Surrealistic Pillow.* How did you get to become a member of the band?

SD: You know, I don't even know. I mean, I've heard about a million stories. Someone told me Earl Palmer recommended me; another person told me Jim Gordon recommended me. Skip Spence was essentially a guitarist and singer, but Marty [Balin, singer] saw Skip as the drummer in the band. I think Skip had been in the marching band in school, or something. So they shoved Skip in a room for a couple of weeks, got him some drums, and made him the drummer.

RS: What did you think of Spence as a drummer?

SD: I liked the way he played. It was real crude and primitive, but that's what made it so interesting. He had no idea what to do, except to get in there and just energize. I learned a lot from watching him play. I really had a big pair of shoes to fill, because I didn't play like him; I played a lot lighter. Actually, I thought I played heavy, compared to other LA. players. But God, coming up to San Francisco was a whole other ball of wax. I lived with Skip and Paul [Kantner, guitarist] in Haight-Ashbury. I listened to the band's tapes over and over again. I went to all the rehearsals. So there was a transition period for me in which I got to learn what the band was all about musically. I even gave Skip a couple of chances to bail out of the whole situation. I told him I'd go back to L.A. and my regular thing. He said, "No, no. I want to go to Mexico and just hang out." Which is what he did. I don't know if he knew what he was walking away from; maybe he did. Maybe he saw some handwriting on the wall.

RS: It's interesting that the Airplane would look to L.A. for a drummer to replace Spence. I mean, after all, there was no love lost between the San Francisco and L.A. music scenes back then.

SD: That's right. I guess the Airplane couldn't find a drummer in San Francisco they were happy with. I mean, there was so much happening in the Bay Area, musically speaking, that bands were just grabbing up all the good drummers. So they looked to L.A. I happened to be a drummer who was pretty experienced and knew how to play. I also had long hair, so I looked right for the times.

RS: Did you know about the Jefferson Airplane before you were asked to join the band?

SD: I had read a small blurb about them, and prior to that, I had done a weekend date in the Bay Area at a place called Frenchie's Bikini A Go Go. It was a popular place for L.A. bands to play; Frank Zappa & the Mothers played there a lot. Walking around North Beach one day, I saw some posters that I could barely read that said something about bands called Quicksilver Messenger Service and the Jefferson Airplane. But that was about all I really knew about the band.

RS: What did you think of the Airplane the first time you played with them?

SD: I liked the band, but it was almost too raw for my taste. It was hard to communicate with the people in the band because no one talked with any real musical knowledge. I would name chords and count bars, but that wasn't part of their program at all. So I had to learn an entirely different approach. It took me about two years to put all my old drum habits in the back of my mind and play just by feel.

RS: I don't hear any awkwardness in your drumming on *Surrealistic Pillow.*

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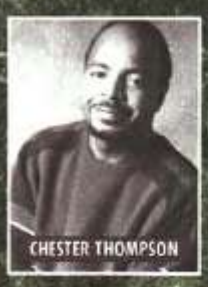
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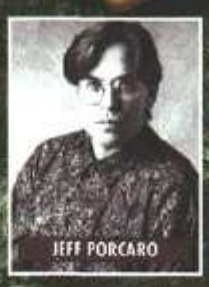
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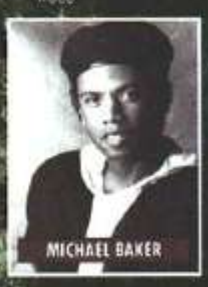
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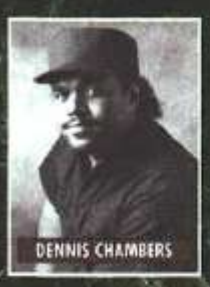
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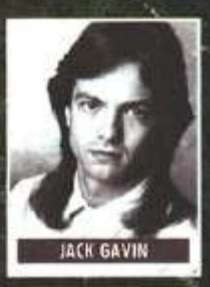
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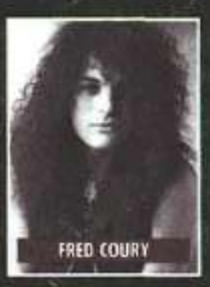
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SD: Well, that's because it was a real smooth transition. I rehearsed with the band a lot and played a number of gigs before we actually went into the studio to do the album.

RS: Was the music on *Surrealistic Pillow* a good indication of what the Jefferson Airplane was all about in 1967?

SD: Not really, because our record company, RCA, wanted a cleaner record than the first one, which was real rough-sounding. I didn't play on the record, but I actually liked it a lot. I thought *Takes Off was a* real adventurous record. We fought RCA tooth and nail over *Surrealistic Pillow,* to no avail. They got what they wanted. They even shoved a tune on the record that wasn't ours.

RS: What song was that?

SD: "How Do You Feel." It was a song that was written by a friend of Rick Jarrard's. Rick produced *Surrealistic Pillow.*

RS: Is there one song on the album that you think stands out as your best?

SD: I like "Plastic Fantastic Lover." It was the one song that I really got to let go on. I was still pretty much playing in an L.A. style—you know, playing the stuff that Hal Blaine taught every L.A. studio drummer so that they wouldn't get too "creative." You laid down the beat and kept it pretty tight. The Phil Spector beats were still happening down in LA., so you shoved a whole wash of echo on the toms and beat the heck out of them.

RS: It's interesting that the Airplane chose to record *Surrealistic Pillow* in LA

SD: Yeah. I remember we brought Jerry Garcia down to play guitar. He played while someone else was jumping up and down like a human metronome so Paul could see where the groove was. Paul and the guys just weren't used to being put in separate cubicles in the studio and wearing headphones and all that. It was a whole new world to them. I mean, they were used to playing without monitors and just kind of screaming out the lyrics.

RS: Did you have much studio experience prior to making *Surrealistic Pillow*?

SD: I had some experience, but I had never made an entire album. I was used to going into the studio and doing three- or six-hour sessions and that was that. *Surrealistic Pillow* was recorded in two weeks.

RS: There are a couple of songs on the album besides "Plastic Fantastic Lover" in which the drum parts are especially important to the other things going on. "3/5 Of A Mile In Ten Seconds" comes to mind first. I especially like how you kicked off the song.

SD: I just listened to what Paul and Jorma [Kaukonen, lead guitarist] were playing. Those guys were into the blues, so they'd introduce blues riffs and see which ones worked and which ones didn't. That's how the songs came to be. I just listened and then reacted.

RS: The two classic songs off *Surrealistic Pillow* are, of course, "Somebody To Love" and "White Rabbit." Both songs were Top-10 smashes. Were you surprised at how well they did?

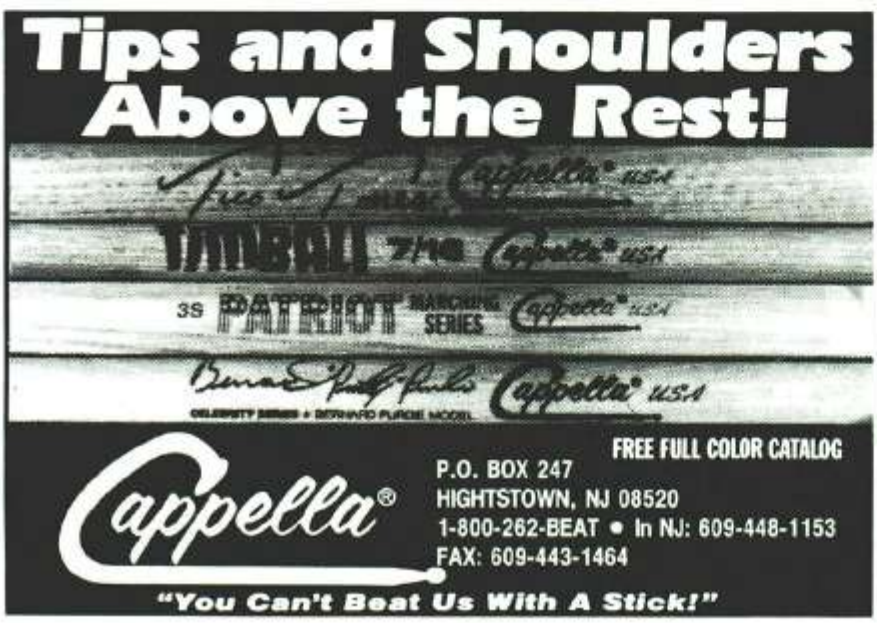
SD: Yeah, I think we were all pretty surprised. We kind of knew that "Somebody To Love" would do something because it was such a good song. But "White Rabbit" really threw us. We all thought it was ridiculous that it did so well. That song went right by the Old Guard. One day everything was normal and the next day there was "White Rabbit." It changed everything. RCA didn't care; it was making money.

RS: There are a number of instances on *Surrealistic Pillow* in which you didn't play the drums, but instead went with simple percussion.

SD: That's true. I played a lot of tambourine. After the album was done, I got into percussion even more. We made some money, so I went out and bought a whole bunch of percussion instruments.

RS: What was your relationship with Jack Casady, the Airplane's bass player?

SD: It was kind of strained. First of all, Jack was the youngest band member, and he was also Jorma's friend. He was from Washington, D.C., where he used to play guitar with Jorma in folk-blues groups. But he wasn't brought in to play guitar; he was brought in to play bass. So he did what was absolutely natural: He played the bass like a guitar. That left me in a hole, because the band didn't really have a bass player—at least not the kind I was used to working with. I mean, from my



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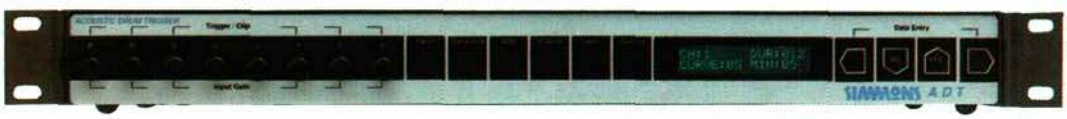

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point of view, Jack played a real deep guitar, [laughs] Trying to keep three 12-strings in tune and then have Jack lumbering around on the bass and me buried at the bottom of the heap with my little jazz drums made for a pretty wild situation.

RS: What kind of drums did you use when you recorded *Surrealistic Pillow*?

SD: When I first came up I had a Gretsch jazz set. I had rivets in my cymbals and things like that, and everyone would look at me kind of cross-eyed. They didn't clang a lot, you see. But it was the right kind of kit for me because I liked to play light.

RS: Did the sound of the Jefferson Airplane change significantly after you replaced Skip Spence?

SD: To a degree. The biggest thing was that I didn't play balls-to-the-wall—which, unfortunately, the rest of the Airplane really wanted. The band would have probably done great during the '70s and early '80s when metal came along. Paul and Jorma weren't looking for finesse, although Marty was. You see, not only did the Airplane have six different personalities, it had six different *split* personalities. No wonder the music turned out like it did.

RS: When was the last time you listened to *Surrealistic Pillow* in its entirety?

SD: It's been a long time. The only time I hear tunes from the album is when they're on the radio. I'll turn it up and think about what I did and how the mix was.

RS: Did *Surrealistic Pillow* make the Jefferson Airplane a lot of money?

SD: I don't know that it made us a lot of money. We got a salary. The band members made $75 a week when I joined. I asked for $100 a week and I got it, because I had a family.

But *Surrealistic Pillow* did give us a strong presence nationally. Everything was happening at once—and it wasn't just playing music and making records. All of a sudden we went to Bill Graham to manage us. He had never done that before, so he was winging everything; we were all learning together. We were in the right place at the right time.

RS: Are you saying that the success of *Surrealistic Pillow* was based on luck?

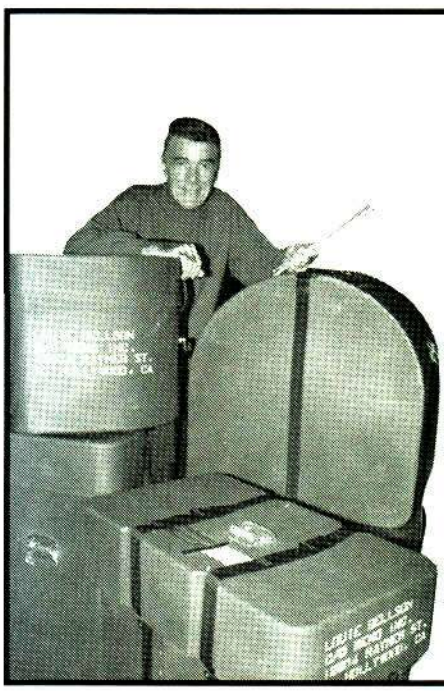
SD: Luck definitely had something to do with it. Anyone in a band wants recognition. You want to hear yourself on the radio. You want success. But we were not ready for what came along with the success. The Jefferson Airplane was part of a very large movement. I think that was hard to deal with. We fell in some holes. One of the things that turned into a problem was that no one wanted to be a leader. I certainly didn't want to be a general. Paul didn't want to, either, although things ultimately fell into his lap. He knew how to move the band and plot the show without getting too strict. Yet, we'd always throw things into the music or the show to keep things loose and unpredictable.

RS: Like what?

SD: Well, I liked to bring robots and toys on stage—which irritated Marty to no end. The one thing that kept the band together was the rank sense of humor everyone had. We would always piss each other out, including Grace [Slick, singer]. She was great at it. She could hang with the best of them. This was all very much an important escape valve for us.

RS: Despite the success of the Airplane, you ultimately left the band in 1970.

SD: I think I quit about 28 times. Finally they just took me seriously. They called me in one afternoon amid this strange silence. I could sense something was going on. I'd been a little bit nuts. The big argument was about Altamont. I had refused to play. I almost got punched out over that one. I was forced into the helicopter. I knew it was going to be bad, and I was right. It wasn't a together gig from the get-go. I'd had about an hour's worth of sleep. We'd played in Miami the night before. We argued on the plane, and at the baggage carousel. Everyone was basically burned out. It had been four years of this nuts-like thing. Enough was enough. Everyone wanted a different thing for the band. I don't blame someone for having personal desires or wanting to be creative; that's human nature. But it was time for me to get out, I guess, and that's what happened.



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New Orleans Drumming: Part 2: Contemporary Rhythms

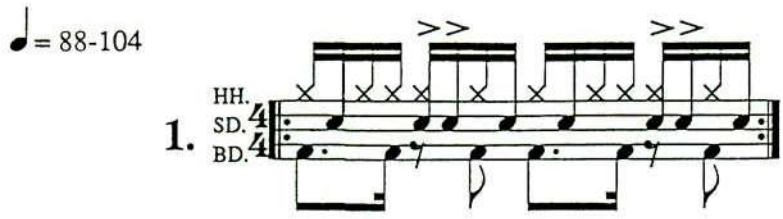
by Joey Farris

MUSIC KEY

This article is the second in a three-part series on New Orleans drumming. Last time we looked at traditional second-line rhythms and variations using rolls. This month we'll explore several New Orleans funk rhythms. These are contemporary funk grooves that have a New Orleans flavor, especially apparent in the bass drum line. Other traditional rhythms, such as the New Orleans second line, have similar bass drum lines.

New Orleans Funk—8th- and 16th-Note Feel

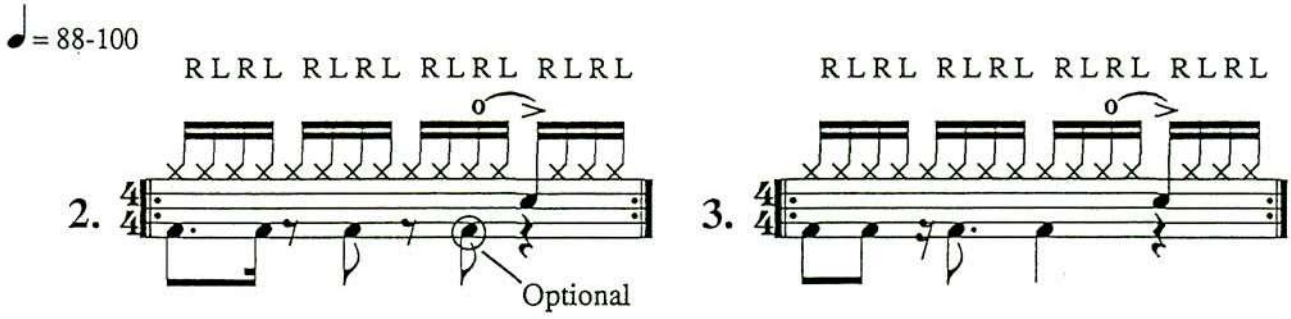
Most drummers in the New Orleans style play rhythms of this type with the right hand on the closed hi-hat. The hi-hat rhythm may also be played on the ride cymbal or the bell of the ride cymbal. In this instance, play the hi-hat on the counts of 2 and 4 where appropriate.



New Orleans Funk—16th-Note Feel

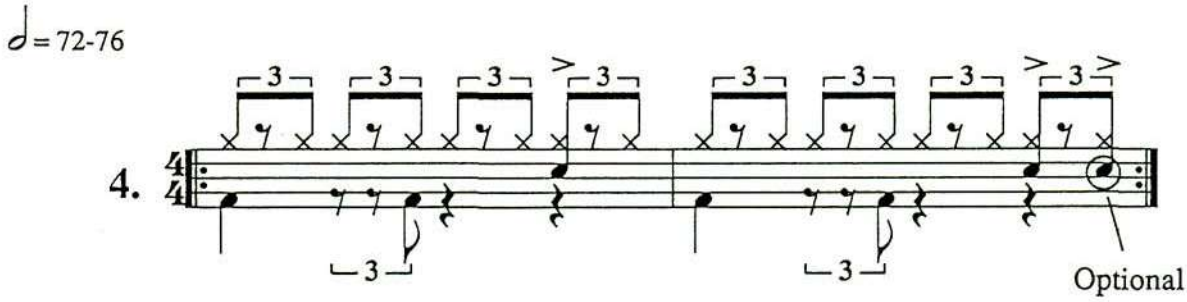
When playing alternating single strokes on the hi-hat, try to produce a loose, swing feel. In slow tempos, many drummers play the 16th notes on the closed hi-hat with the right hand only.

Although few accents are indicated, most New Orleans drummers play a slight accent on the hi-hat in unison with the bass drum. This helps to produce the loose feeling associated with this style.

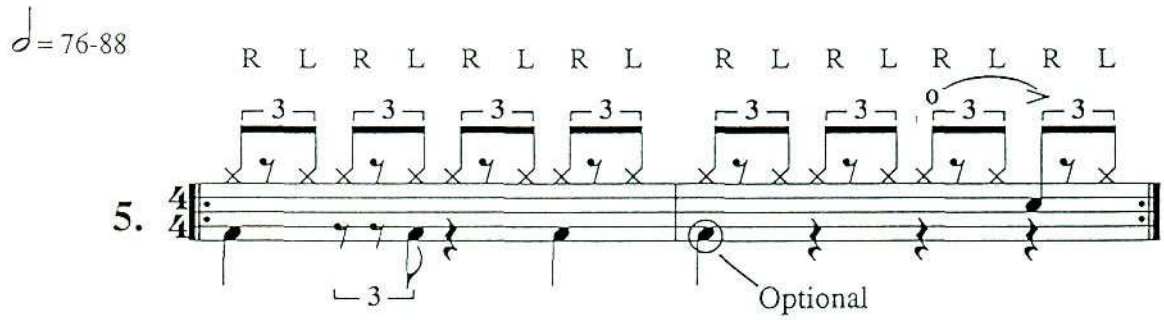


New Orleans Funk—Shuffle Feel

This drumset variation on the traditional New Orleans groove features the right hand on the closed hi-hat. The hi-hat rhythm may also be played on the ride cymbal or the bell of the ride cymbal. When playing the ride cymbal, play the hi-hat where appropriate.



This drumset shuffle feel is a contemporary version of the traditional New Orleans groove. It is loose, dancing, and swinging. It's a two-handed shuffle played on the closed hi-hat, employing alternating single strokes. The right hand plays the accent on the snare drum.



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continued from page 27

have your ride cymbal on your left. He showed me I can play with both hands, left and right, and get around the kit pretty okay with both hands, leading with either. It was frustrating then, but it makes me stronger now. He had me do muscle- and grip-enhancing things, a great pressure exercise for the feet, things you can do without even having a pair of drumsticks. You can do them on the bus. He had great exercises, and I did my homework.

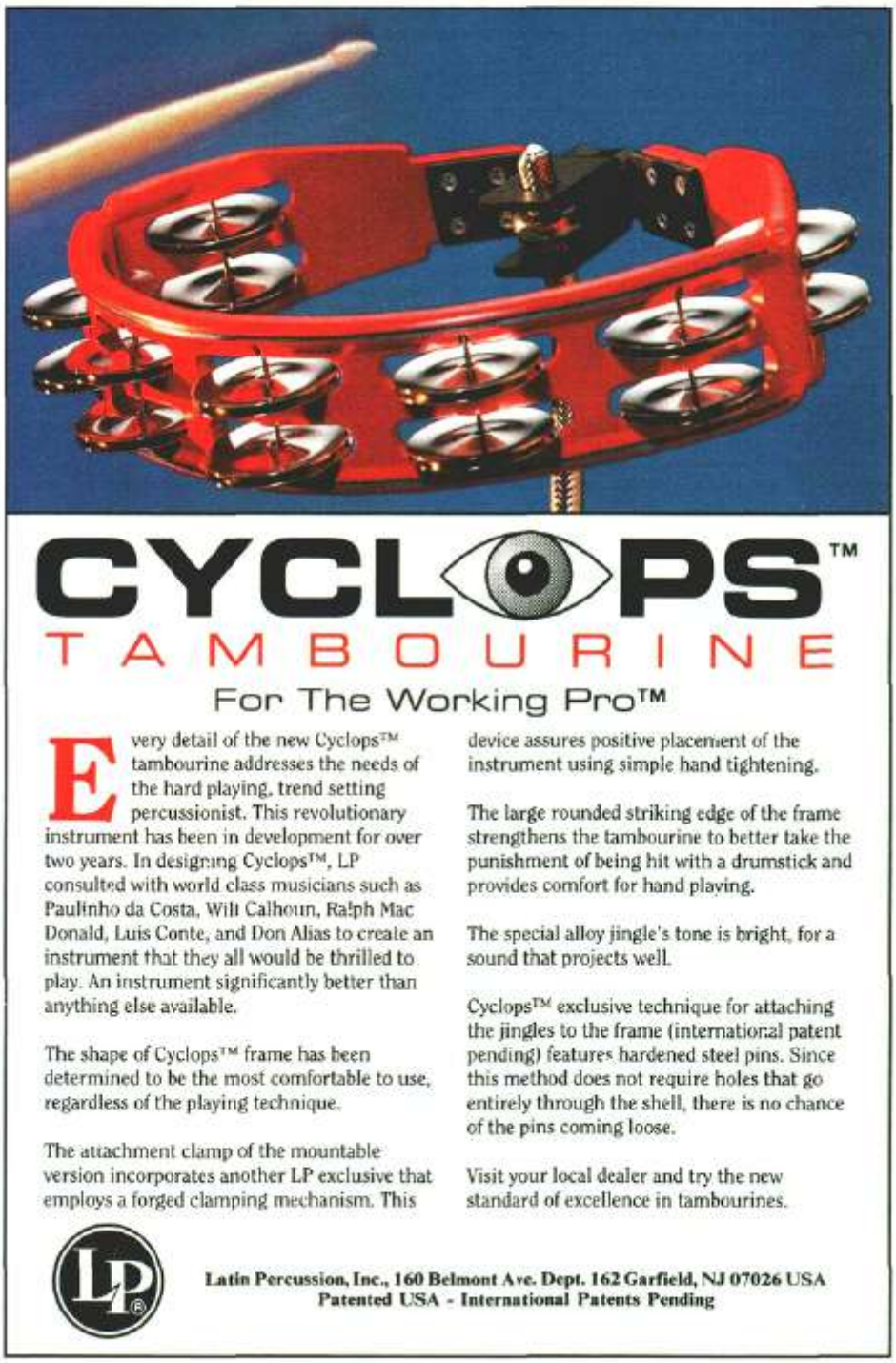
RT: Has stripping down your playing helped in the studio and in live shows?

MB: I think that's true about anything. A cart can only hold so much, and if you put any more on it, not only are you going to squash all the shit below it, but the cart might not even roll. It *might* break. But I don't really think about "studio" as opposed to anything else. Now we're in the writing and rehearsing mode, so I'm trying to do all these new songs and really dial them in. I do my homework. I could show you a stack of shit that I wake up at three or four in the morning and write down, or stay up all night writing down. I try to think things out, and if it's new stuff I try to lock in hard with the bass, but still leave enough room for the vocals and keyboards. There's a lot of stuff in the music, so it's best to keep the rhythm section going steady and smooth. I try to know what I'm going to do when I get there, and not take that much time doing it.

RT: Do you and Bill work things out together or just work on it until something clicks?

MB: Well, yesterday Bill, Roddy, and I went in and played 15 songs for Jim, the guitar player, who put it all on DAT and took it home. Today we went back in and played it ourselves and worked on a couple of new songs. While many of the songs start out with the guitar or keyboards, the three of us play together a lot and really work stuff out. Our guitar player says he works best when he's sitting in his easy chair with a cigarette and beer and his four-track, and nobody's bugging him. We all work differently. I work well when I can spend time with the stuff, grow with it, play it, be solid with the bass player—plant it in the ground and let it sit for some time until some roots come out. That's what's happening with this new music, and that's why I feel good about it. We're spending time with it, and it's getting better. Then when you record, it's not like you just wrote the songs yesterday, and six months later they have a lot more hair on their chest.

It's also important to practice in your mind as well as physically, because anybody can play something that's appropriate enough to a song. It's actually the ability to whittle it down and get it really right that counts. You've got to hear how things work overall. If you're just hearing the kick and the guitar and maybe some bass in your monitor, you don't hear the whole thing because you're sitting right in the middle of it. So if you can hear it



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in your mind, that's great. If you can't, you should bring a tape recorder.

I really like the studio because it's challenging. You know that it's going to be done, and that's it. I don't know if I change anything—I just try to play it as well as I can, get a good take. I try to keep the meter as steady as possible, because if they have to build on a wobbly foundation, they're screwed. And I try not to do too many takes.

RT: Is there any adjustment for doing a Coliseum show like the one with Metallica and Queensryche last Saturday?

MB: If it's outrageously giant like the Coliseum, then it's like, "Man, look at all these people." I don't really notice it otherwise. I barely look up. I see the bass and guitar players' feet a lot, because when I play I'm looking down. I spend a lot of time at shows communicating with my tech. I'll knock my snare drum out of tune every single song, so we'll re-tune my snare or a tom, or get me more monitor. Getting me water is a big one when it's hot, because not only do I honestly like to play as hard as I can, I also don't like to stop between songs. The other

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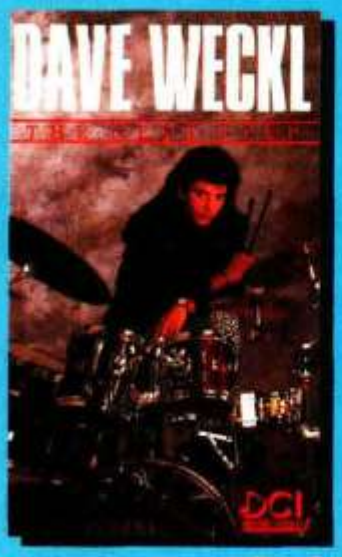

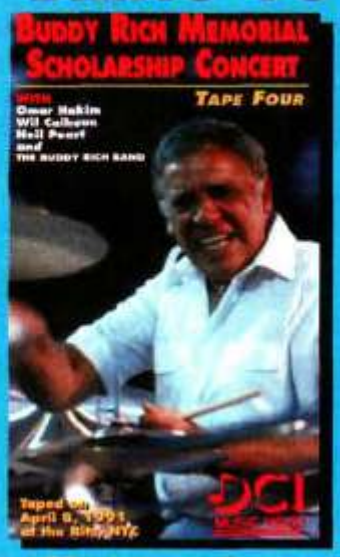

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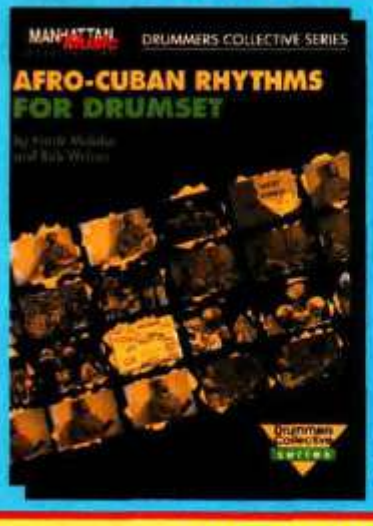

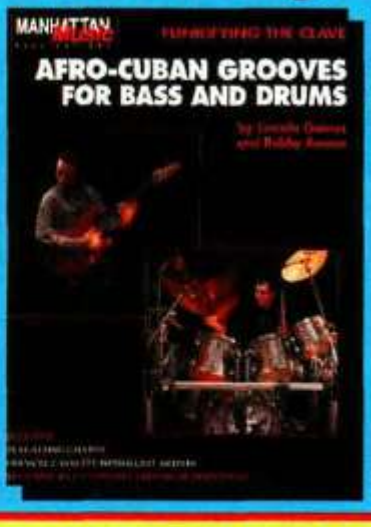

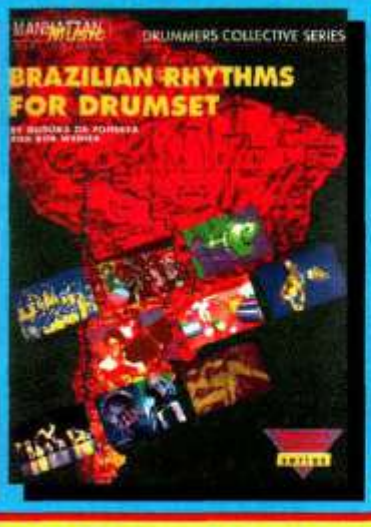

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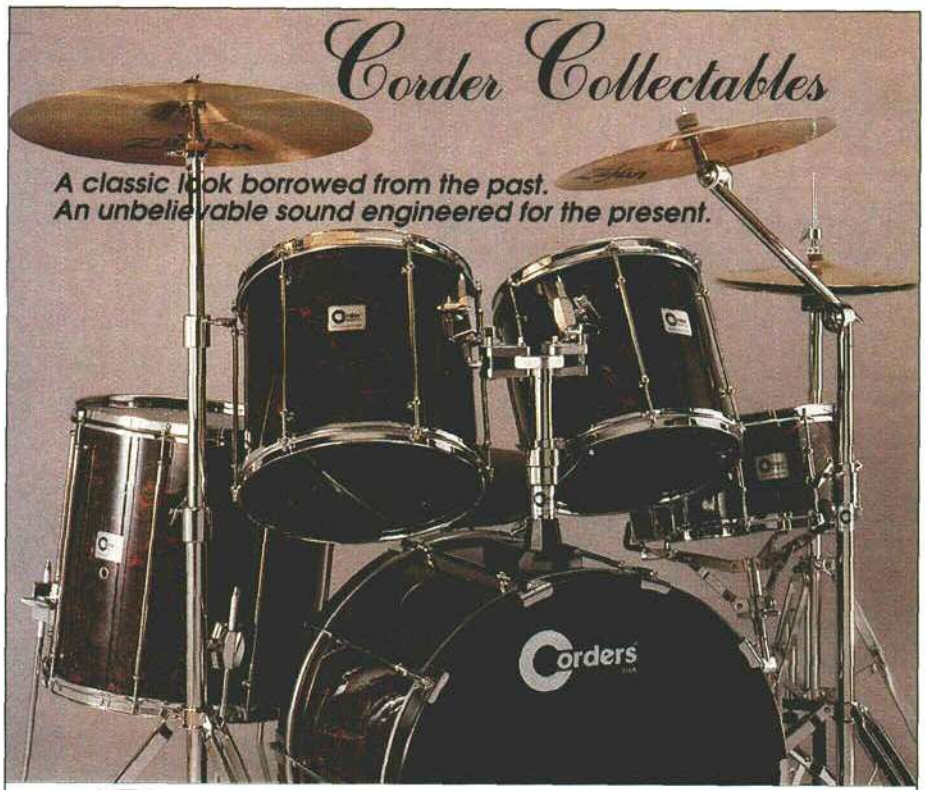

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guys in the band don't really like to stop that much either. When I stop they talk too much anyway, so I don't stop. If it's a night show, I'll barely even see the crowd—maybe the front row. It doesn't really matter, because if you're playing good, that's your concentration, that's your focus—playing good and getting the pacing right. If you're playing bad, you're going to be pissed off and only concentrating on getting back on the right foot anyway.

RT: I like the way you incorporate flams into a lot of your playing. Is that a conscious thing?

MB: It was conscious when I started, because the idea was to "get off that hi-hat and start whacking the drums." And boy, what a great sound it makes when you hit rimshots with the sticks reversed with both hands as hard as you can. Everybody thinks keeping the foot going on the hi-hat is like John Bonham on "Moby Dick," but go back to Art Blakey, man. He burned. He would do these press rolls with giant *crescendos,* and his foot would be on the hi-hat keeping it going. And that's the same as what C.K

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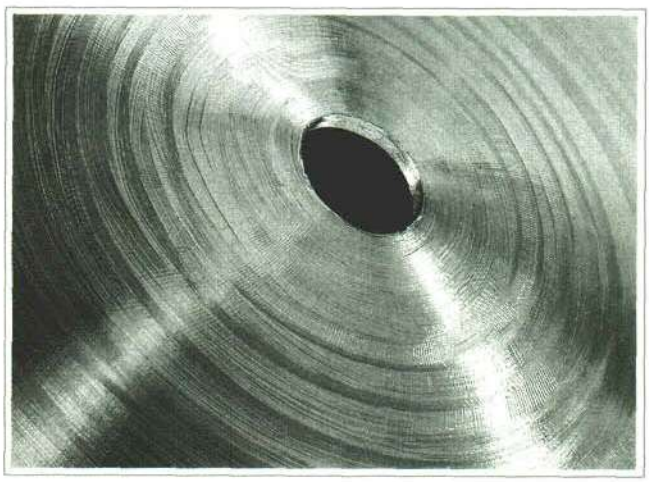

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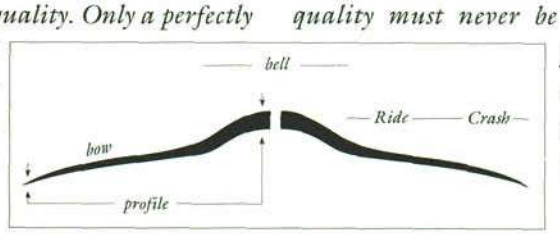

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did, playing a pattern with the foot keeping time straight through, or a counterbeat with yourself, keeping a syncopated counter-rhythm. It came from trying to use everything you can to do something that fits. Put it all together. It's an interesting pattern, an interesting aggregate, but you can still tap your foot and follow it. It doesn't lose you, it sucks you in. It makes you kind of trance-like.

That's how Faith No More started, really. We'd just play one pattern all the time. There's a song on *The Real Thing* called "Zombie Eaters," and there's a thing on the bass in the beginning that we would sit and do for half an hour. Just repeat that little bit over and over. That was a big part of our early music—repeating something really good until we were comfortable with it. That's the way it was with flams. I didn't know what a flam was. I started doing it, honestly, just to get a strong, definite sound. Tony Williams can do great things with closed flams. *Brutal.* I can look back now and say that the first flams I ever heard were on Black Sabbath's *Volume Four.* I can't really say that I picked up on it, because I was actually more obsessed with the bass player and guitar player in that band than the drummer.

RT: So it doesn't come from a rudimental background.

MB: That's one thing I never studied. I was jealous of that because it would have been cool to be in the marching band. But unfortunately when all that was happening, I was getting into trouble and was interested in rock music, the other side of it. I would love to have been a parade drummer. I keep running into people who were. I think the drummer from Guns was. I read something David Garibaldi wrote about paradiddles, but I don't know much about rudiments. I do try to practice double and triple strokes, though, just to keep clean, loose, and precise.

RT: I wanted to ask about your kick drum work. Is that a double pedal you use on "Underwater Love?"

MB: Never. I'm proud of that. Except for a very few things, I think you can do anything you want on a single. And you can do it more convincingly, except for stamina things. You can do double strokes, triple strokes, and 16ths without

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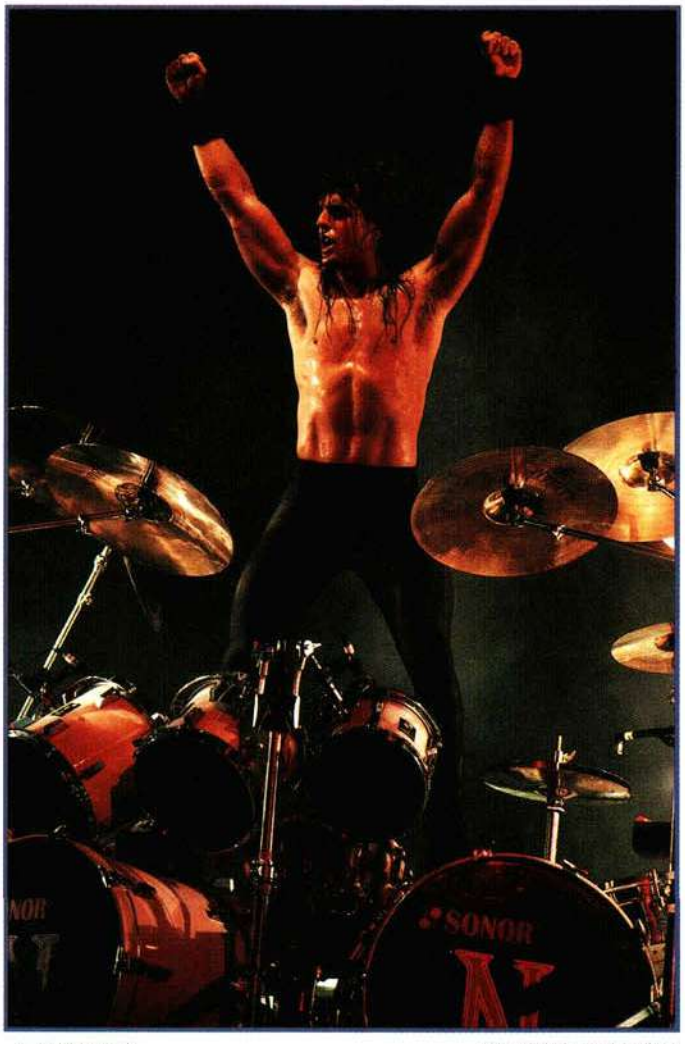

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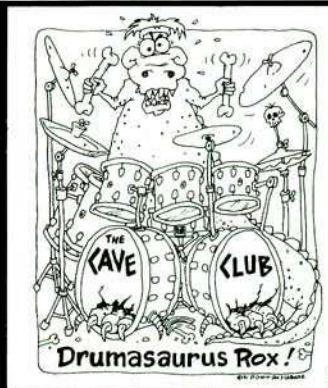

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any problems. It comes back to doing your homework and putting it right in your mind. I've tried to make do with the bare minimum. It keeps coming back to that.

RT: As far as your bass drum technique, do you play on the heel or toe of your foot?

MB: Both, I think. I was taught a wonderful exercise: You're sitting there on the bus, in the cab, on the toilet. Start out with heel down—very steady, not fast—and just do whatever notes you want. Get louder and louder, push harder and harder, and then get quieter and quieter. Do a *crescendo* until your calf just burns. Build it up, keeping it steady all the way through, and make it loud and then soft. That's a great exercise. It gives you so much strength. I wish I could tell you honestly, heel up or heel down, but I'm sure I do it both ways. I think the faster stuff I probably do heel down.

I'm proud of my bass drum technique, because I don't feel like I have fast hands. The guy from Slayer blows my mind, because he is so incredibly clean and precise with his hands. He's like a surgeon. Some other guys are incredibly funky, they can go way outside the beat and come right back in on it. But I think I have solid hands, and good bass drum technique, and the bass drum's what's loudest.

RT: You incorporate your kick into the fills a lot.

MB: Everything. We may play the same songs two nights in a row, but there's differences every night, and it's not really thought out to do this or that or the other thing. It's more of a flow. It just comes out. If you're a singer, you've got to keep your parts similar. I've got a few cues that everybody pays attention to, but between those I've got a lot of free reign. And I'm thankful that we can change it up and express more of how it's going, how you are at the moment.

RT: Faith No More seems like a pretty democratic band.

MB: It's definitely a band effort. Everybody trusts everybody else to play what they think is good. There's no dictator; everybody does their thing. That's why songwriting and everything is split equally. That's common sense, but a lot of people don't work that way. We do. You

know, a slave doesn't give you his best, he gives you what you force out of him. We have done well for ourselves, and there's no reason not to give our absolute best, because it does make a difference.

RT: You guys had rapping in your music long before singer Mike Patton joined the group.

MB: People say it's a new phenomenon, but we wrote "We Care A Lot" in 1984 and recorded it in '85. Again, it goes back to when I first started learning from C.K. There are rhythms and counter-rhythms, and when you put a bunch of different rhythms together, it's a syncopation. You can get the drummer, the bass player, the keyboardist, and the guitarist to play different rhythms—but with all of them working together. A singer singing a melody might work, or a very choppy and rhythmic Billy Idol kind of singing might be appropriate. Take the song "Underwater Love." Most of the time he's singing there, but that one line, "Touch me from below, I'll never let you go," that's a choppy counter-rhythm. Sometimes it's appropriate. It's stupid to do one thing all the time.

We got interested in rap when our keyboardist bought the first Run DMC record in '83 or '84. And then there was Johnson Crew and Grandmaster Flash and all the Tommy Boy stuff. It had cool, aggressive drum beats and cool sounds, and totally rhythmic chanting and rapping. But even before that I was totally into the Jamaican DJs and toasters like Yellowman, U Roy, Big Youth, and I Roy—the dance-hall stuff. That's rhythmic, and jacks me up. I make no apologies for that. Rapping or chanting is appropriate when you need something that's counter-rhythmic, and it kicks the song in well.

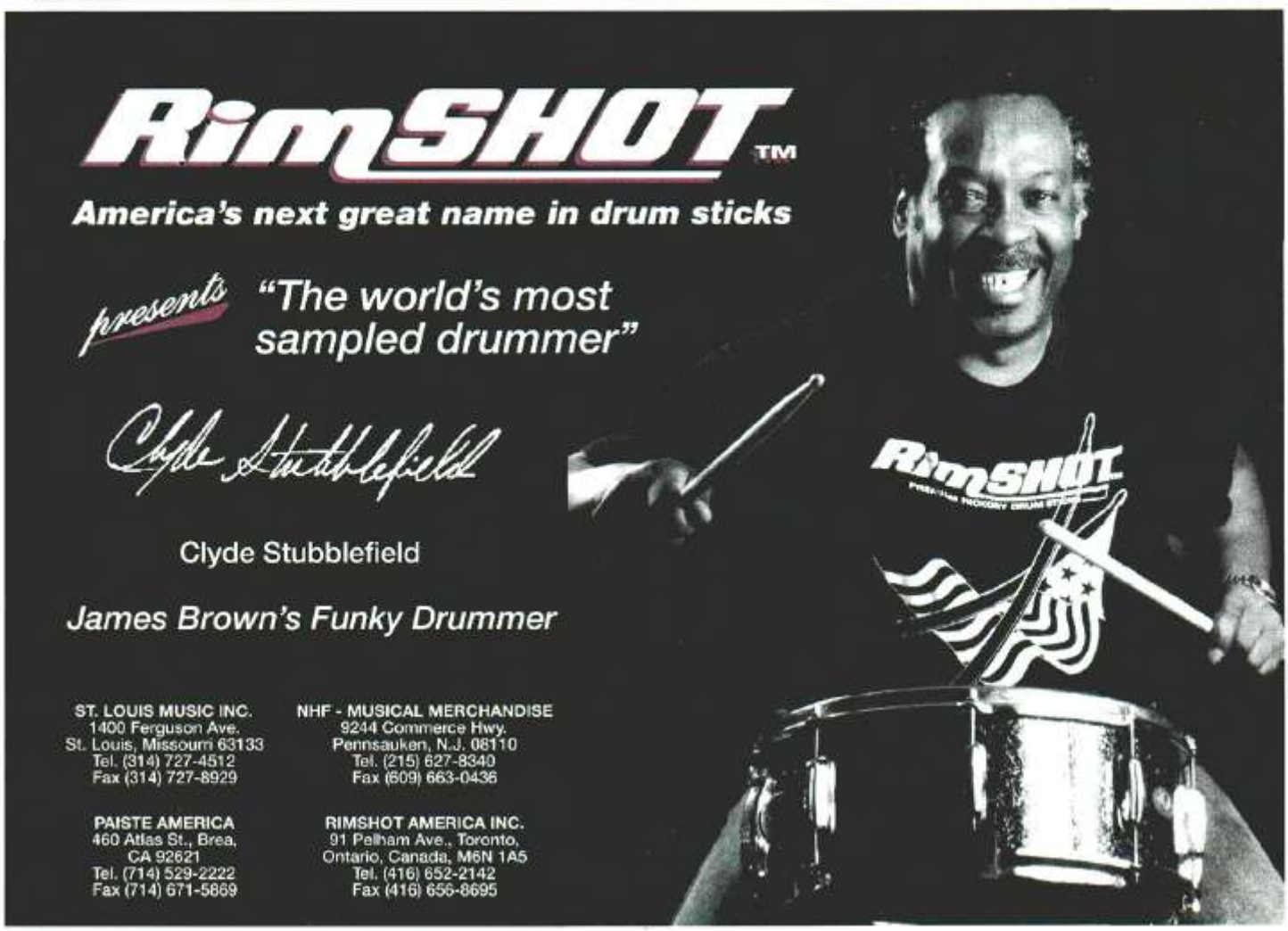
RT: Did you specifically listen to the drums in rap?

MB: Oh, yeah. Keith LeBlanc is the guy. He did all the programming for Tommy Boy in the early days. He played with Tackhead, who did some cool things with industrial sounds, real aggressive. Dub Syndicate is good stuff, kind of guerilla music. Yeah, the drums in rap are good. So are the drums in James Brown's music, and the Meters. The Jazz Messengers, Mingus—with Dannie Richmond—Basie, Dr. John, the drums in that music are all great. On and on.

It's not right to think that everybody's fighting against each other. And it's not right to look at it like a pie, like there's only so much, and if *you* get some then I don't get that much. I refuse to look at it like that, because that could make you real bitter. I think you can find good in everybody, and everybody can be better off for the contribution. There's enough for everybody. If our band has success, it opens it up for a lot of other bands. And if other bands have success I think it makes it better for everybody—if somebody's doing something that they really believe in. How many people do you know with just one record?

RT: Are you using any triggering or electronics?

MB: No, just acoustic drums. It doesn't make sense to sample somebody else's acoustic drum sound. Spend the time and tune your drums so that they sound



right. If you can't, talk to somebody that can make them sound right. Spend the time. There's nothing that you can get on a sample that you can't get from the drum, unless you want the sound of a piece of metal hitting metal. Then get a piece of metal and hit metal. I can understand it for sound effects, but we have a keyboard player—let him do that. I like the sound of drums.

RT: Have you been listening to anything interesting?

MB: I'm listening to a lot of '40s music now, and it's beautiful. Louis Jordan is one of my heroes. Blakey, Mingus, Dr. John.... Yeah, it's amazing what has come from Fats Waller to now. The differences—and the similarities too. I would like to see something comparing John Bonham and Art Blakey. Because everybody thinks that Bonham is like the king. He took that to the masses, and the mainstream. But so much of Blakey reminds me of him. I don't know if that's a foolish thing to say, but something about his spirit, his soul, his shouting, his getting wild. He lived loose, he was a wild guy. And he marked his time the way Bonham did with the hi-hat.

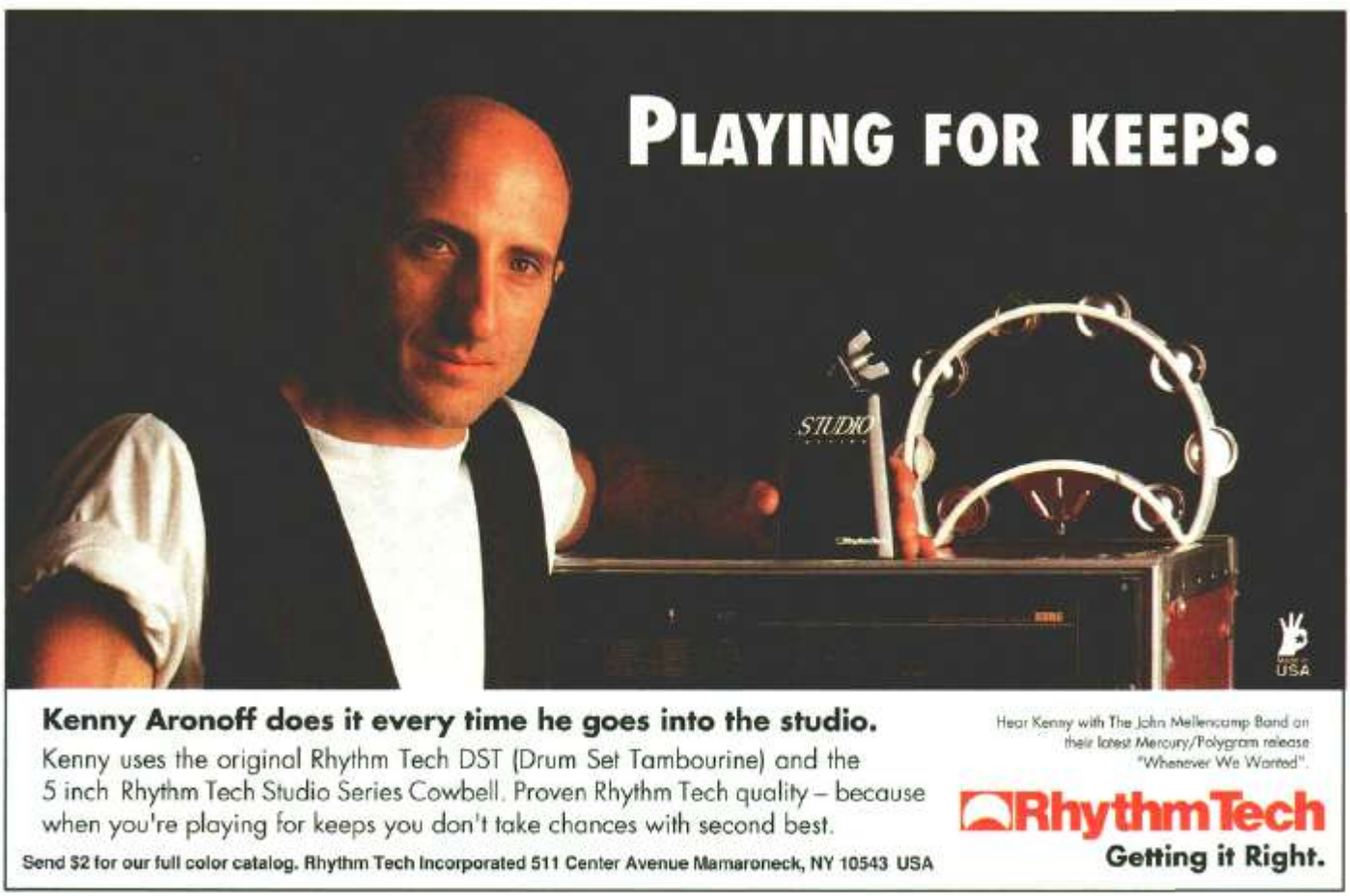
RT: Ginger Baker likes to put himself up in that kind of company.

MB: He talks about all that stuff, but he's a good drummer. He did play with African drummers in the late 1960s, but Blakey did it before, in the 1950s. Those battle records are great, the Blakey big beat records, and *Drum Night At Birdland.* I never thought I'd get excited about a record of drum solos, but—if you do it well.... I just got into the Chick Webb Orchestra from the 1930s, too—talk about cutting! Start listening to Cab Calloway, and then listen to Louis Jordan, then Wynonie Harris, then Slim Gaillard—if you're looking, you just keep following the string. It makes me proud of what I do.

RT: Do you have any other suggestions for drummers who are reading this?

MB: The longer you go playing with the same person, the better. If you really dig somebody that you're playing with, stick with it, because you can't buy that. You can't just assemble that chemistry. If you've got roots with a bass player, it's a mistake to just close your eyes to it. And I would recommend to be very patient with playing drums. It's like golf or something. You can learn to get by in a passing way real quick, and can go around a golf course in about two months of practicing. But that's not the whole end. Be patient and do it because you love doing it. Don't feel insignificant and stop doing it because you see Chad Wackerman or Steve Gadd doing it. Just make that purify your motivation, and do it because you *want* to do it.

Drumming is an attitude. Once you get the muscle memory and routine of what you do down, then your fingerprint comes on it, and it becomes personal. It's a great thing because anybody can do it, and you can spend as little or as much energy on it as you want, and deal with it your way. It's therapeutic as hell, because it's satisfying and physical—much more physical than a lot of other instruments. Drums are not an elitist instrument, and the musician shouldn't be put up like a magician. Anybody can do it.



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Max Roach Chorus & Orchestra

Max Roach Quartet:

ODEAN POPE: tn sx

CECIL BRIDGEWATER: tpt

TYRONE BROWN: bs

MAX ROACH: dr

Uptown String Quartet:

DIANE MONROE, LESA TERRY: vln

MAXINE ROACH: vla

EILEEN FOLSON: cello

M'Boom:

ROY BROOKS, JOE CHAMBERS, OMAR CLAY, ELI FOUNTAIN, FRED KING, RAY MANTILLA, FRANCISCO MORA, MAX ROACH, WARREN SMITH: perc

Ghost Dance, Parts I-III; A Quiet Place; The Profit; Tears; Self Portrait; A Little Booker; Street Dance; Tricotism; Mwalimu; Drums Unlimited.

For anyone unfamiliar with the breadth of Max Roach's artistry, *To The Max!* is a worthy introduction. For the initiated, this CD charges through familiar territory: the marriage of spiritual chorus and jazz band passionately represented in Max's proud *Freedom Now Suite* (1960); the easy swagger of M'Boom, the original jazz percussion ensemble; the kinetic urgency of Max's pianoless quartet; and the archetypal form, wisdom, and humor of Roach the soloist.

The most satisfying moments of this double CD set are captured in "A Little Booker," a 21-minute dialog between the Roach quartet and the Uptown String Quartet (including the leader's daughter Maxine). Uptown's incisive, unsentimental riffing and hip voicings create a unified whole not usually heard in such crossovers. Tyrone Brown's rock-steady walking bass allows Max frequent interactive departures from timekeeping and a classic accompanied solo. The restless energy evident throughout the recording works especially well here, fueling an intense drive.

A monument to the vision and commitment of one of the founding fathers of modern jazz, this is vintage Max.

• ***Hal Howland***

CHAD WACKERMAN

Forty Reasons

CMPCD48

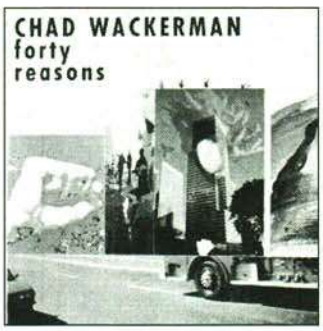
CHAD WACKERMAN: dr

ALLAN HOLDSWORTH: gtr

JIM COX: kybd, pno, org

JIMMY JOHNSON: bs

Holiday Insane; You Came Along; Forty Reasons; Fearless; Quiet Life; Waltzing On Jupiter; Tell Me; House On Fire; Hidden Places; Go; Schemes



Chad Wackerman has provided sterling service behind the drumkit for such notables as Allan Holdsworth, Frank *Zappa,* Barbra Streisand, and, as of late, Andy Summers. Now *Forty Reasons* marks the debut solo recording for this talented drummer.

Wackerman proves to be an inventive and exploratory composer (he wrote six of the eleven compositions), subduing showy fills for a more musical and pertinent drum role. *Forty Reasons* confirms that this musically nimble quartet is less interested in practicing the art of chops display than in pursuing a focused and musical path.

Allan Holdsworth swims with thrilling melodies and matching arrangements, providing a roller-coaster ride the rest of the band takes off from. On tracks such as "Forty Reasons," "Hidden Places," and "Holiday Insane," you'll notice the quartet's use of space, ghostly thrills, nudging notes, and mixtures of drifting lyricism and dug-in grooving.

Forty Reasons not only supplies ample evidence of Wackerman's growth as a top-notch drummer, but as a unique and complex composer as well.

• ***Carlos Tabakof***

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN AND DOUBLE TROUBLE

The *Sky Is Crying*

Epic EK 47380

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN: gtr, vcl

CHRIS LAYTON: dr

TOMMY SHANNON: bs

REESE WYNANS: kybd

Boot Hill; The Sky Is Crying; Little Wing; Wham; May I Have A Talk With You; Close To You; Chitlins Con Carne; So Excited; Life By The Drop

Culled from mid-'80s unreleased studio sessions by the late guitarist's brother Jimmie Vaughan, *The Sky Is Crying* easily turns out to be one of Stevie's best albums. Passionate, blistering performances that often found their way into his live sets are given the full blues treatment, with Vaughan squeezing every drop of stinging sentiment out of his guitar.

A wicked, riveting "Boot Hill" leads into the slow blues of the title track, an ear-bending question and answer session between Vaughan and his axe. The album's showcase is Hendrix's "Little Wing," but Vaughan clearly makes it his own in a soft-spoken, instru-

mental that packs a big wallop. "Wham" and "Life By The Drop," a touching vocal performance accompanied by acoustic guitar, are other standouts of this ten-track CD.

While the show is obviously Stevie's, drummer Chris Layton is no slouch. Always pushing, always swinging, he achieves the blues drummer's main goal while addressing its simple deceptiveness. It's hard to play simple, driving rhythm in a blues context and not sound overly stiff or pedestrian. Layton wins on all counts.

With this trove of great tracks now available, one hopes there is much more where this came from.

• *Ken Micallef*

TRILOK GURTU

Living Magic

CMP CD50

TRILOK GURTU: dr, tabla, vcl, cong, perc

JAN GARBAREK: sx

NANA VASCONCELOS: cong, repenique, vcl, perc

DANIEL GOYONE: kybd, pno

NICOLAS FISZMAN: bs, gtr

TUNDE JEGEDE: Kora, cello i

SHANTHI RAO:veena

Baba; Living Magic; Once I Wished A Tree Upside Down...; Transition; From Scratch; Tac, et demi; TMNOK

It is said that if you choose to play more than one instrument, you have to play each one so well that everyone thinks whatever they are hearing you on at a particular time is your primary axe. Trilok Gurtu certainly fulfills that requirement on this disc. Hear him on drumset and you assume he has concentrated on that. Then hear him on tabla, and you can't imagine that he had time to learn anything else. And he plays brushes in such a way that you could believe *that* to be his main interest.

The music on *Living Magic* ranges from Indian-like improvisations that are primarily melody and rhythm to Weather Report-flavored fusion. Gurtu combines his Indian command of complex rhythms with a very American sense of funk and swing, resulting in a powerful style of drumming that ignites any music it comes in contact with. Add to that the Brazilian jungle percussion of Nana Vasconcelos, and you have one of the most stimulating percussion-dominated recordings of the year.

• *Rick Mattingly*

CHUCK LOEB

Balance

DMPCD484

CHUCK LOEB: gtr, synth

JON WERKING: pno, kybd

PAUL SOCLOW: bs

ZACH DANZIGER: dr

CARMEN CUESTA: vcl

BOB MINTZER: bs, clar

NELSON RANGELL: al sx

En El Rio; Daddy Longlegs; Star-stream; Balance; Eternal Flame; The Day After Yesterday; Espionage; The Hello; Dear John; Straight A's; Faith Alone

Guitarist Chuck Loeb's *Balance* is well titled. This is a cohesive, thematic work, each song contributing to the

overall result: strong compositions in a Metheny-ish mode that, even at their most lively, are tinged with a hint of melancholy.

From the New York-at-night feel of "Daddy Longlegs" to the uptempo "Star-stream" to gorgeous ballads like "Dear John" and "Balance," Loeb and some of New York's best musicians deliver a highly crafted, cliche-free performance.

Twenty-year-old Zach Danziger may be the next major drummer to appear on the jazz/fusion scene. He has worked regularly with Michel Camilo, Bob Mintzer, and Eddie Gomez and has recorded with Leni Stern. On *Balance* he truly arrives.

Whether playing the groove or soloing, Danziger has total command of the instrument, displaying finesse and a distinctive touch not evident in the work of better known fusion players. His influences would seem to be Colaiuta by way of Gadd, with a touch of Erskine thrown in for more of a jazz sensibility.

Danziger's intricate funk subtleties on "Daddy Longlegs" or the aggressive solos on "Star-stream" and "Day After Yesterday" prove the point. With Zach now residing in California, it will be interesting to see if he can track the L.A. studio scene and achieve wider recognition.

• *Ken Micallef*

CORROSION OF CONFORMITY

Blind

Relativity 88561-2031-2

KARL AGELL: vcl

WOODY WEATHERMAN: gtr

PEPPER KEENAN: gtr, vcl

PHIL SWISHER: bs

REED MULLIN: dr

These Shrouded Temples; Damned For All Time; Dance Of The Dead; Buried; Break The Circle; Painted Smiling Face; Mine Are The Eyes Of God; Shallow Ground; Vote With A Bullet; Great Purification; White Noise; Echoes In The Well; Remain.

Combine the riffing of Black Sabbath, the frenzied aggression on Anthrax, the kick of a funk band, and a 1970s swagger—and you have Corrosion of Conformity. With *Blind,* these North Carolinians put out one of the most powerful albums of 1991.

Reed Mullin perfectly complements the band's distinct, if implacable style with a pounding foundation layered with tasteful cymbal and tom work and surprising dynamic turns.

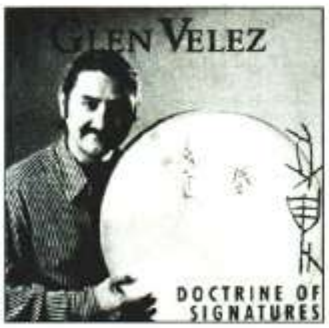
Mullin shows what he's all about on "Damned For All Time," where his tribal beat leads into a smorgasbord of speed, power, touch, and time swings, while his Bonham-

inspired beats push the crush-grooves of "Buried" and "Echoes In The Well." He picks up the pace with clean open-stroke rolls, tight cut-offs, and cool 16th-note triplet hi-hat work on "Mine Are The Eyes Of God."

Corrosion of Conformity has wandered in cult status for the past couple years, but with *Blind,* they could fall into the upswell of popularity among similar bands. Meanwhile, don't wait for the charts to turn your head. Wrap your ears around this record and melt!

• ***Matt Peiken***

GLEN VELEZ
Doctrine Of Signatures
CMP CD54
GLEN VELEZ: tar drums, riq, Australian Aboriginal sticks, shakers, Tonga wood drum, Filipino buzz sticks, vcl
EVA ATSALIS, ED BRUNICARDI, RANDY CRAFTON, JAN HAGIWARA: tar drums
STEVE CORN: Bonsuri bamboo flute
White-Throated Sparrow; Doctrine Of Signatures



The less one has to work with, the more creative one has to be. While Glen Velez is listed in the credits as playing several instruments, most of them only turn up briefly.

The emphasis on this recording is the tar drum, which Velez and his associates can get more out of than most people can get from a complete drumset.

The first piece features a haunting flute melody accompanied by two tar drums. The deep tones of the drum serve as contrast to the flute, giving a great deal of sonic depth to a very open arrangement.

The tour-de-force of this disc, however, is the 45-minute title track, wherein Velez leads an ensemble of tar drums through a 41-beat cycle of theme and variations.

Sometimes the pulse is simple and hypnotic; sometimes it is complex; sometimes it grooves. Always it is fascinating.

• ***Rick Mattingly***

KILLER JOE
Scene Of The Crime
Hard Ticket (01612-65069-2)
MAX WEINBERG: dr
JOE DELIA: kybd
JIMMY VIVINO: gtr
HAYWOOD GREGORY: vcl
DAVID KEYES: bs
MARK FENDER: trp
JERRY VIVINO: sx
BOB SMITH: tbn
ERIK LAWRENCE: bar sx
Scene Of The Crime; Busted; It's All Right; Club Soul City; Peter Gunn '91; Let's Have A Natural Ball; Down In Mexico; There's Nobody Home; Summer On Signal Hill; Where Were You (On Our Wedding Day)?; Sharks In The Water; Chicken Shack Boogie

If *Scene Of The Crime* sounds to you like a throwback to the days when bands used to record live in the studio and actually have fun making a record, then you've gotten the

point. Not only does the album recall the glory days when big band rhythm & blues ruled, but Killer Joe, the New Jersey-based outfit responsible for the resurrection, could easily call any band led by Louis Jordan in the late '40s a first cousin.

Spearheaded by E Street Band drummer Max Weinberg, whose wonderfully crisp and snappy rhythms keep *Scene Of The Crime* jumping from start to finish, Killer Joe hits a home run with its debut album.

Weinberg's stellar performance reveals a brand new side of his style. In place of the booming snare he's given Bruce Springsteen for some fifteen years, we hear all kinds of new, jazzy riffs and bluesy backbeats that many Weinberg fans probably never knew he had in him.

Weinberg is aided by a top-notch set of fellow musicians, especially keyboard ace Delia and guitarist Vivino, and a list of guest artists (Little Steven, Jon Bon Jovi, Southside Johnny) that reads like a Who's Who of pop.

With everyone in sync, *Scene Of The Crime* swings and swelters with enough R&B fire to heat any dancefloor or party.

• ***Robert Santelli***

BOOKS

DRUM SET ETUDES
Books I, II, and III
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Price: $5.95 each

There's an old joke about the parent of a drumset student asking the teacher when the child is going to learn to play a song. But that points out the problem with much drumset instruction: Students often learn a lot of beat and fill patterns, but never really learn to put them together in a musical way. The etudes in these three books are a very musical solution to that problem.

The first book contains 37 one-page etudes, while Books II and III contain 19 two-page etudes each. Most of the material is rock- or triplet-based (written usually as 6/8 or 12/8), with some mixed meter and Latin etudes included in Book III. There is just a smattering of jazz.

Book I is said to be for beginning to intermediate students, while the other two books are both intermediate level. As the author is a college instructor, those designations are most likely aimed at college-age players. When dealing with younger students, I'd classify Book I as intermediate and Books II and III as advanced.

Combining time feels with fill and solo patterns, these etudes should develop a great deal of facility around the drumset. The student will pick up a wealth of practical ideas, and have fun doing so.

• ***Rick Mattingly***

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continued from page 31

densed what he did.

On the song "Papa Loved Mama," I'm playing some pretty weird stuff. There's a lot of stuff on there where, instead of using a ride cymbal or hi-hat, I'm riding the snare drum and doing a lot of rolls and things like that. I had just gotten a Sabian endorsement before we started this album, and I was trying out a bunch of Sabian cymbals. I had just gotten a Chinese cymbal that day, and I was wearing it out. It's all over that cut, and I was loving it. It's a real raunchy tune anyway, and we were going for something really punchy. That fit just right.

RF: By the time of the recording of *Ropin' The Wind,* was there any different kind of vibe in the studio?

MS: No, not that I could detect. I think we went out of our way to see that that didn't happen, and maybe cut up a little more. Garth's a real funny guy. I know what you're saying, and I've seen that happen where everyone tenses up and it's, "Wow, we've got to top that last thing." I don't view it so much that way as, "Boy, I hope this song is going to create a challenge."

RF: Let's talk about Kathy Mattea.

MS: Kathy's music requires a gentler approach. It is similar in some ways, since it's the same producer [Allen Reynolds] and engineer [Mark Miller]. I don't think the strength in her records comes from the drums as much as it does with Garth Brooks. I think it's more of a melodic type of thing. I view my role with her as more of a support.

RF: Can you think of stand-out cuts?

MS: One that stands out is "Five And Dime," because it was her first Top-10 record. It was one of those things where I got chill bumps and thought, "This is going to be a hit record," and that doesn't happen to me very often. She's a real special lady. I have a lot of respect for Kathy. Being with her in the very early days and seeing her come from being an obscure sort of cult singer to what she's become, I'm really proud of her and real proud to have been part of that and see her grow.

On her new album, *Time Passes By,* the title cut was fun. I had played on the demo of that. Her husband had written the song, and we spent a lot more time on the demo than the cutting of the actual track. It's one of those things where it shifts time from 6/8 to 4/4 and back and forth in certain sections. That's one of the few times you'll hear that on a country record. I like doing something a little different.

RF: Any other stand-out Kathy Mattea cuts?

MS: Of course "Eighteen Wheels And A Dozen Roses." I remember cutting the track with *Blasticks,* and then I went back and overdubbed hi-hat and cymbals, which was kind of different. With her, I'll do things like use a brush in the left hand and a stick in the right hand, or maybe a shaker in my right hand and a brush in my left hand. I'll try a lot of things to see what feels best. With her, we'll usually take as much time as we need. I remember trying that song a lot of different ways—stick on the hi-hat, brush in the left hand, what about brush in the right hand? I convinced Allen that I could put the hi-hat part on, and it wouldn't feel weird. I think it kind of

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helped move the track along.

RF: Most of Kathy's ballads are mid-tempo.

MS: That was a conscious effort. I like playing ballads a lot, and I'll tend to power them out where they're really slamming hard by the chorus. A lot of times I'll have to compromise. Bassist Bob Wray and I figure out some compromise method of playing it but not overpowering it. We try to keep that ballad thing going, but not make it so big that it's overpowering.

RF: What are the requirements of a Nashville studio drummer? Do you have to read? Do you have to have studied? I know each producer needs different things....

MS: That's what makes it tricky. I think they need a musician. Most of the dates that we do, the parts aren't written out, so it's up to you if you want to jot down the rhythms and what you want to play. I don't think reading is a requirement, but I think it is something that could only enhance your ability. I do read, but I usually don't have to do a lot of it. I think it's good if you know theory and how a song is structured.

RF: How is that helpful?

MS: Sometimes I might hear that the structure of the song would be better if the bridge were moved up earlier in the song. It might strengthen the song, and I might hear that before somebody else does. There have been times when I and other musicians have made those kinds of suggestions and they've worked.

RF: We might be treading dangerous waters here, but sometimes that kind of input can be considered "songwriting." I wonder how often you might feel uncompensated.

MS: Well...I know what you mean, but that's something it doesn't do any good to dwell on, because I honestly don't think it will ever change.

RF: Has anybody ever offered you a point on an album or any piece of the pie at all?

MS: No, never. I don't know what to say about those kinds of things. I wish somebody would take the lead and think about possibly doing that, but gee, I don't know. I don't think it will ever happen. It's not something I dwell on.

RF: We were talking about the requirements in the studio. Being able to deal with pressure is certainly one of them.

MS: It certainly is pressure-packed, although a lot of times you put yourself through more than you need to. I think it helps—if you are a Christian—to pray and to look for guidance outside yourself. I can look outside myself and not turn it so much inwards. I realize I'm just a small part of what's going on and that I am truly blessed to be at the stage of my career that I'm at. I read something recently that said one rule to have is "Don't sweat the small stuff." The second rule was "It's all small stuff."

RF: But as far as requirements, you were fully prepared, having done a lot of studying. Why was that important to you at the time?

MS: Right out of high school I went into the Army band. At the time, I felt like I could gain some experience outside of here. Up until that time, I was one of those Ringo freaks—as soon as I saw the Beatles on Ed Sullivan, I had to have some drums. I played drums in high school band, and I was in R&B bands,

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and then I headed into the Army band, which I did for three years. That was an education in itself. I was around some really good jazz players, and that was something I didn't know anything about. The way I understand, a lot of people come to rock 'n' roll and R&B from jazz. Well, I did it the other way. I realized there's a lot out there that I wasn't aware of, so I immediately went to college.

I guess I became disillusioned after a while, because I was learning a lot—theory and all these things that were very helpful—but I became frustrated because I wasn't getting to play. Then I got back into nightclubs and I did the route of playing with some rock bands, trying to get record deals. We had all these big ideas of how we didn't want to be bothered with the business—we wanted to be musicians. After several attempts and several failures, I realized maybe I should learn a little bit about the business. So I re-entered college to study music business. That required moving back to Muscle Shoals, so while I was there, I got more involved with the music business in the Shoals area.

My major influence is probably Roger Hawkins. Roger was really kind to let me hang around the studio a little bit, to come in and meet some of those folks. And that was an education, just watching that guy do a session. He is, to me, the epitome of the session drummer—for one thing, because of his attitude. He's always there to make it right. And God, he plays with so much feeling. You can hear everything the guy has lived in every backbeat. Some people who might not know him might not realize that. I feel so fortunate to have been in that position. Here was this little kid who listened to Aretha Franklin records going, "My God, what are they doing?" and "How are they doing that?" And then a few years later, I'm watching this guy who played on my favorite records.

RF: So you got into the session scene down there?

MS: Yes. I worked a lot at Fame, and I did a ton of demos at Wishbone. It was great working for Clayton Ivey, who took me under his wing. Eventually Roger hired me to work on some things he produced, and that was a great compliment to me. It was a great learning experience. When I was on staff at Wishbone, the writers were incredible—Mac McAnally, Robert Byrne, and Donny Lowery—and we played on tons of demos that were big hits for Ronnie Milsap and other people who were cutting in Nashville. Through a lot of those kinds of things, I made some connections in Nashville, and I wound up getting the chance to play on some Alabama dates for the *Roll On* album. That was a big kick because that was one of my first major sessions. Prior to this, Donny Lowery, who had written Alabama's "Old Flame" with Mac McAnally, had signed with a publisher in Nashville. He started pulling me up to Nashville to do demos for him. From there we got some new accounts. When somebody's new it's like, "Hey, why don't we give the guy a shot?"

RF: Is it really like that? I see it as being a pretty closed circle of the elite.

MS: If a writer is pretty hot at that time and getting a lot of cuts, somebody will say, "Who did you use on your last demo?" A lot of times it comes from the writer. Here, the demo market is like

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bread and butter. Not everybody is playing on records. I feel really fortunate to have been invited to the party.

RF: The Alabama sessions were your first big jobs. Was working with them intimidating?

MS: Yes. I had worked with their producer [Harold Shedd] and their engineering team before, so I was comfortable with all of that. But as far as realizing that these guys were gigantic stars, that was a little intimidating at first—until I got to know them. The fortunate thing for me was that, on that album, Teddy played bass, so I had that connection. He and I zeroed in on what we were doing. We talked about different patterns and that sort of thing quite a bit. I still work for Teddy by the way. I do a lot of songwriter demos with him. But I think it would have been different had I been thrown in with a lot of session players I didn't know. My favorite song on that album was "Fire In The Night." It's just a groove song.

RF: Were you thinking in terms of Nashville being the next place you needed to be?

MS: No, not me. I'm just an Alabama guy, and I love the place. I always loved living in the Shoals. But around this time, the business in Muscle Shoals seemed to be drying up. I was doing a lot of demos, but no real record dates were happening. It became harder to draw artists down there, probably because the purse strings for budgets had gotten tight. I probably would have stayed in Alabama and driven back and forth, but my wife, who is my inspiration and the person who keeps me going, said, "We should just move on up there." It's the best move I ever made. I love it here.

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RF: The musical requirements of the two areas are really different. R&B is very different from country music. Did you find you had to change your approach?

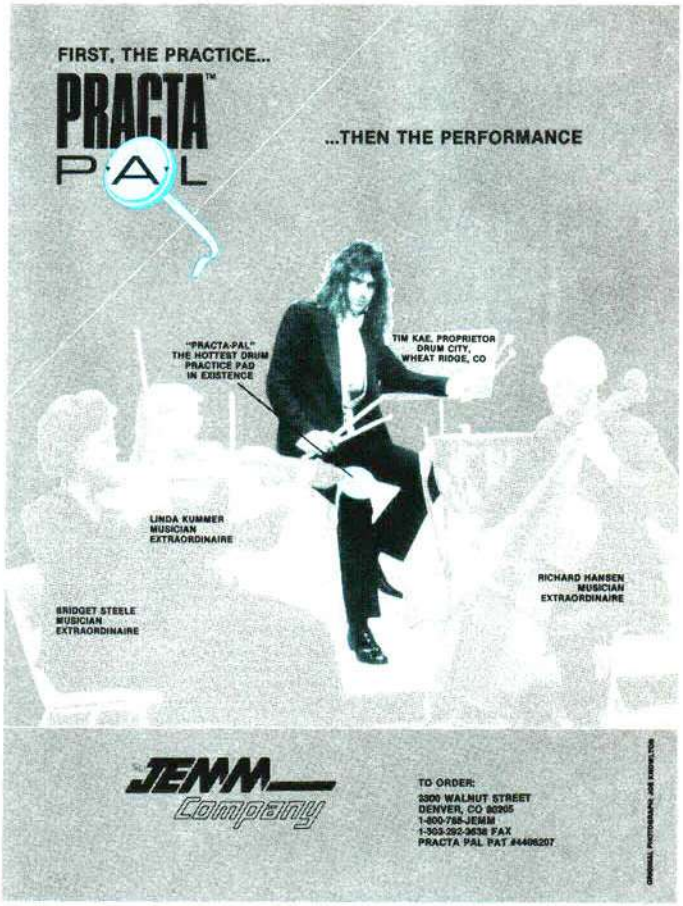
MS: I guess it's more of a mental attitude. That R&B thing is just in the way I play, and there isn't anything I can do to change it. I hope that's what makes my playing a little different from everyone else. I did change my approach in that I don't play as much. I can remember doing an early demo up here right after I moved, and there was a section where there was a whole note over a chord, and then the downbeat after a whole note, and everybody got there a long time before I did!

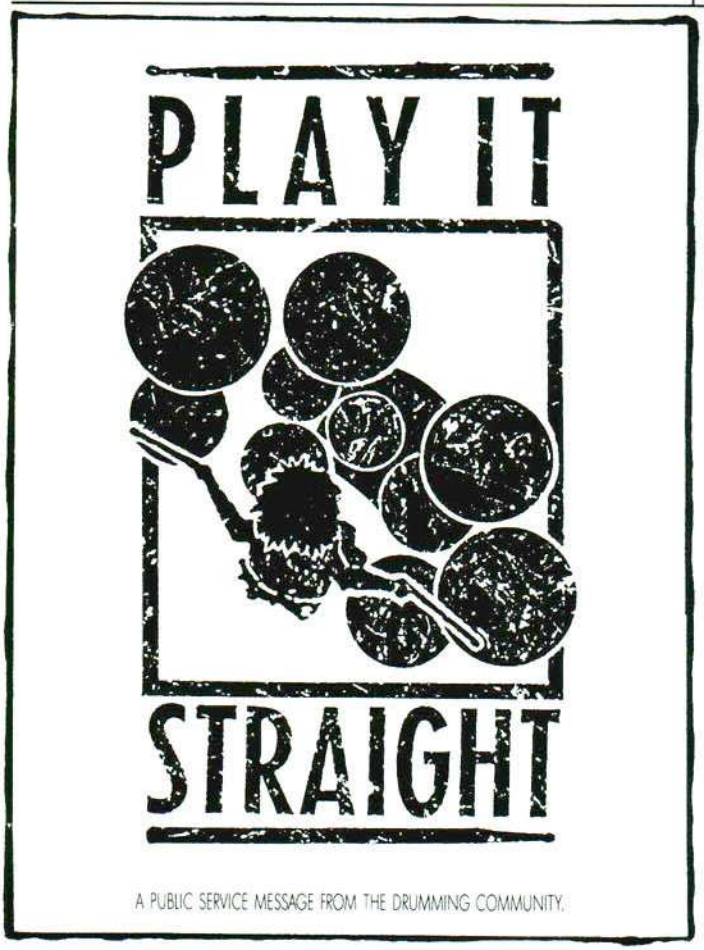
RF: You've worked for a lot of drummers, like James Stroud, Roger Hawkins, Clyde Brooks, and Levon Helm.

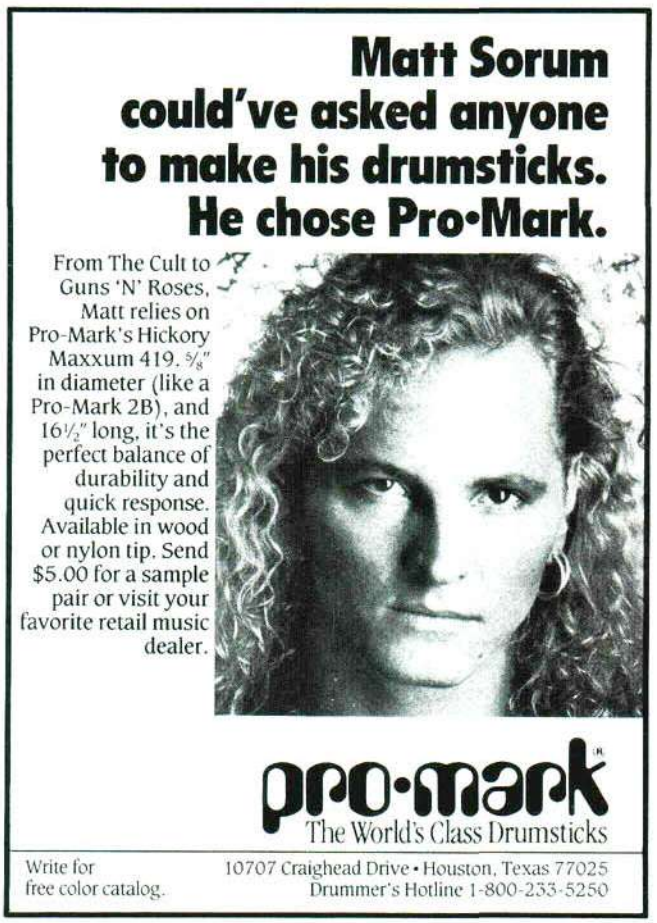
MS: I've had a lot of people say, "It must be pressure working for those guys," but I don't really look at it that way. Maybe I should, [laughs] But I look at it like these guys have been there and they know what to look out for. My first experience doing that was with Roger, and he could see trouble spots before I could. He would come over to me, and in a real gentle way he'd say, "Look out for this, because it may be tricky here," instead of letting me fall on my face. I think most drummers are that way. They want to help things along. There's never anything to be gained by being negative in the studio.

RF: Let's talk some about producers in general. There may be some producers who aren't quite as helpful or who don't know how to communicate their ideas. What do you hope for from a producer in order to do what you do best?

MS: I think the best producers let you go for your first instinct







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on a track—what you think is going to work best. They hire you for your ideas and for you to express yourself on your instrument. If it's way out in left field and they realize it's taking the record down a different avenue than they had envisioned it, then it's their responsibility to step in and say, "Hey guys, let's think of it in a different light." I like to have the opportunity to express myself on how I feel about a particular song on a particular day.

RF: You deal with all different kinds of personalities. What is the reality of the different producers you work with?

MS: Sometimes you'll get the people who are not musically capable of telling you what they want to hear. Then I feel as though it's my job to keep coming up with ideas and putting them out there. "Try another pattern, try another tempo...." Keep trying to do something that will spark someone else to think of something to do. There are some producers who purposely make it hard. I don't know why. But it's the real world, so you have to deal with all kinds. It's always best to be a peacemaker rather than a troublemaker.

RF: What would be a negative session?

MS: Sometimes that sort of thing can come from the artist. If the artist is totally dissatisfied with what's going down on the session, it's really hard to gain their respect and pull them back in for another track. If a song isn't working, I like to hear a producer say, "Let's drop this song and come back to it." Maybe a different day with a different attitude will make it easier to tackle.

RF: What equipment do you generally bring to a session?

MS: Lately, mainly acoustic drums. I've got an Akai sampler, and sometimes I'll use it to trigger some toms or kick drum, but usually not a snare. I have triggered a rimclick thing, but lately I've been getting away from that because I've been getting sick and tired of hearing that woodblock sound. And a lot of the engineers are agreeing with me. I'll play it and they'll say, "How's the real one sound?" So I'll hit it and they'll say, "Turn the sampler off."

RF: What does your acoustic set consist of?

MS: For the past couple of years I've been using a Gretsch set with a 20" kick and 10x10, 12x12, and 14x14 toms, all with the RIMS mounts. Sometimes I'll change kick drums, depending on the session. I've got a couple of other bass drums that are 22", but most of the time I like to use the 20". I've had guys say, "It's a little drum, so it's going to sound little"—until they hear it. It's got a lot of punch to it.

RF: How many snares do you bring?

MS: At least three—sometimes five, from a piccolo up to a 10x14 Ludwig marching snare.

RF: What about cymbals?

MS: I'm using Sabians now, and my setup depends on whatever my ears hear that day. I have one of those 20" HH *Classic* rides and then about five different crashes. I've got a 17" medium-thin, a 16" thin, a 16" medium-thin, a 14" thin, a 16" Chinese, and 14" hi-hats.

RF: What projects would you use the Akai on?

MS: The other night I triggered timpani from it on a contemporary Christian thing. I've also done some children's records where I triggered some percussion sounds. I use it more for extraneous stuff.

RF: What advice would you give to a drummer just moving to town?

MS: Study as much as you can. If you can learn to play guitar or piano, do that before you come here, because that will help you out. Don't expect to go right to work in the studios. There are a lot of other places to play in Nashville, like nightclubs. They don't pay really well, so it would be a good idea to get another job doing something. Meet as many people as you can. If you know somebody who is doing studio work and that's what you want to do, talk to them as much as you can and find out how they got into it. And play.

Drum Contests

by Roy Burns

I entered my first drum contest when I was 12 years old, in my hometown of Emporia, Kansas. The event was part of a statewide contest for concert bands, instrumental soloists, vocalists, and choirs sponsored each year by the Kansas school system.

I played several rudiments in the traditional "open and close" style as requested by the judge. My solo was the rudimental classic "The Downfall Of Paris." I performed on a parade drum that came down well past my knees (I was small for my age), but I did well and advanced to the state finals. Again I did well, receiving the highest rating and collecting a "gold" medal. The medal definitely wasn't *made* of gold, but for me and my parents, it was actually *better* than gold. We were all pleased and proud. It was a great experience and did much to heighten my enthusiasm for playing the drums.

Recently, one of my students asked me to help him prepare for a contest sponsored by a chain of music stores. He was very apprehensive about playing a solo on a strange drumkit and competing in front of a panel of judges and an audience.

The first thing that became apparent was that out of a panel of six judges—some of them fairly well known drummers—at least half were not especially well qualified to judge a contest. The second apparent thing was that—unlike my early experience at the school contest—there were no firm rules as to how the contestants were to be evaluated. For example, applause from the audience was considered a major factor in the judging. Naturally, several contestants showed up accompanied by a large group of enthusiastic friends. They cheered wildly when their friend simply stepped on stage to adjust one of the drumsets provided for the contestants.

My student played well enough to advance to the next level of the play-offs. At that level, the panel of judges was somewhat better. My student again did well enough to advance through two more rounds to the "finals," where he came in second. The young man who came in first played very well.

All in all, it had been a good experience for my student. Part of this was due to our discussions prior to the contest. My advice was, first of all, realize that a contest of this type is really a promotion for the music store. Secondly, a drum contest will not make or break your career. (We're not talking about *Star Search* here.) Winning or losing will not affect your future chances as a professional drummer. Realizing this helps you to deal with the pressure of performing and competing.

The positive side of contests like this is that they are a great opportunity to perform in front of an audience—as well as in front of other drummers. Just preparing to perform under some pressure is very beneficial. When you approach the contest with these attitudes, it will be a positive experience for you—regardless of whether you win or lose.

"A drum contest will not make or break your career. We're not talking about *Star Search* here."

Recently, another very large store had a similar contest. However, in this case, the standards for the judging were clear and well thought-out. Each drummer was asked to play several grooves with a rhythm section (which I thought was a great idea), then he or she was asked to play a solo.

At this particular event, drummers were allowed to use their own kits. One young man had a massive drumkit, requiring the help of friends to set it up. He also came equipped with an arrogant attitude that suggested that he knew how great he was. He stood around smiling as others played, apparently confident that he would win easily.

A funny thing happened, though. This young man didn't play well at all with the rhythm section. He acted as though he couldn't wait to get to his solo, which he *knew* was a killer.

However, once again, his time was bad during the drum solo. He played loud and fast but sounded forced and stiff. Also, many of the figures he played were simply not in tempo. When the results were announced, he did not even place in the top three. He was absolutely furious, and left in a huff—tears streaming down his face. He had approached the contest in an arrogant and immature manner, and naturally he was disappointed.

As a matter of fact, the drummer who came in first had less technique. However, he played within what he could execute, used dynamics, employed different sounds around the kit, and played his entire solo in time. Remember, it is not how much technique you have, it is how you *use* it. Playing fast and loud can be exciting and very satisfying—*if* the solo is played in time and with a good feel. Also, the best solos have a sense of form and a sense of musicality.

A good five-minute drum solo should contain a groove, employ dynamics, and, in a sense, tell a story. It should be a development of a theme, or several related themes. Most good feature solos have a predetermined form, within which the drummer can improvise. They are "arrangements," if you will, just like arrangements of songs for a band.

If you decide to enter a drum contest, try to find out in advance what the requirements are. Prepare yourself to meet those requirements. Approach the contest as a learning experience—as opposed to a competition. Don't worry about winning or losing, just play as well as you can. Real music is about the joy of playing, not about winning and losing. If everyone in the contest has this attitude, it will be a sharing experience. When that happens—as it does occasionally—*everybody* wins!

Hand-Made Drumsticks:
A Lost Art

by Herb Brochstein

First, let me offer a Texas-sized "thank you" to *MD* for inviting me to share some historical information about "hand-made" drumsticks that I thought drummers might find interesting. Webster's dictionary defines "hand-made" as "Made by hand or a hand process—especially as distinguished from a machine or mechanical process." Here's how I came to gain an appreciation for that definition.

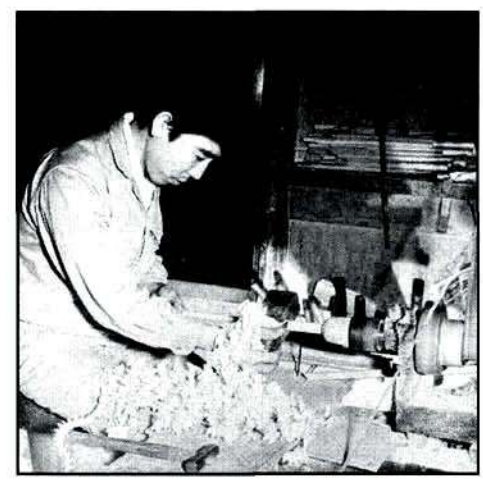
In 1957 I was a full-time professional player, teacher, and drumshop owner. A traveling salesman sold me six pairs of Japanese oak sticks. They looked good, felt great, sounded wonderful, and lasted much longer than the domestic sticks available from the major drum companies at that time. After a few months, however, I couldn't locate the salesman again to obtain more sticks. I then began a search that lasted almost a full year, and I ultimately located the Japanese source of supply. My purpose was to provide my students and retail customers with better-quality drumsticks; I didn't dream of starting a drumstick business. But soon after, wholesalers and drumshops were calling, asking me to supply them with sticks. This was the start of Pro-Mark.

At the time, I didn't know much about how the sticks were manufactured in Japan. It was a year or so later, on my first trip to the Orient, that I discovered that the sticks we were selling were genuinely hand-made. They *had* to be, because in Japan in the late 1950s there were no sophisticated lathes—no modern machinery or technology at all for producing drumsticks. They had only old-world craftsmanship with primitive hand tools—and they made the sticks one at a time. Obviously, they had a very limited production capacity. But I was amazed that a hand-making process could be more consistent than the machine methods used by all the famous drum companies.

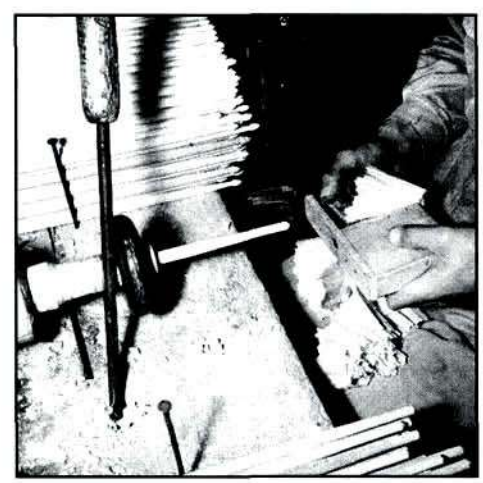
Since then, of course, technology has improved tremendously, and the demand for drumsticks has skyrocketed. Consequently, today all major drumstick manufacturers use modern, sophisticated lathes to turn their sticks—including 90% of Pro-Mark's sticks. (The other 10%—special custom designs and certain limited-run models—are still hand-made.)

I've never lost my admiration and respect for the craftsmen who create high-quality drumsticks by hand. And with the following photos and explanations as a starting point, who knows? There may be another new generation of stick-makers out there, ready to try their hands!

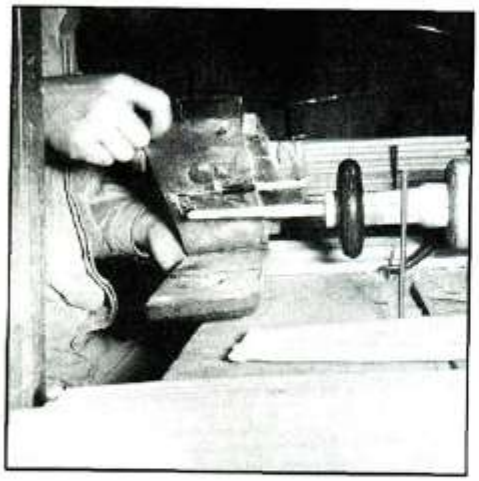
1. These crude tools converted square wooden rods into drumsticks. Tool A shaped the wood square into round dowel form. Tool B shaped the neck, or taper portion, of the stick. Tool C "pinched" the tip size and shape.



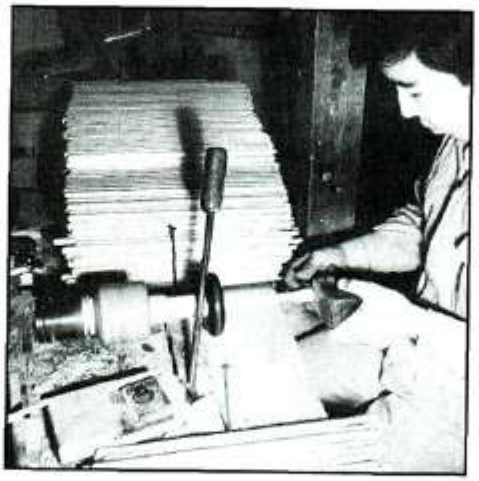
2. An operator turned the square rod into a round dowel.



3. The neck of the stick was created.



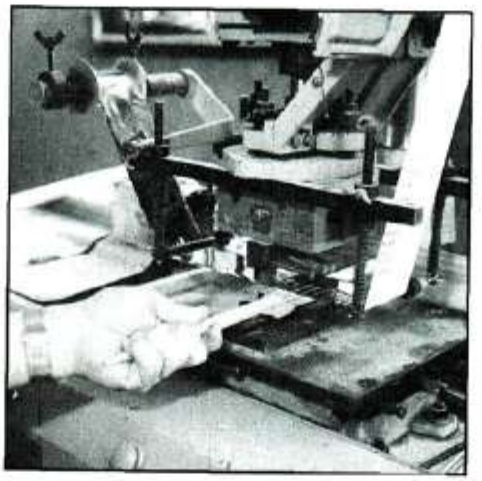
4. The tip or "bead" was shaped.



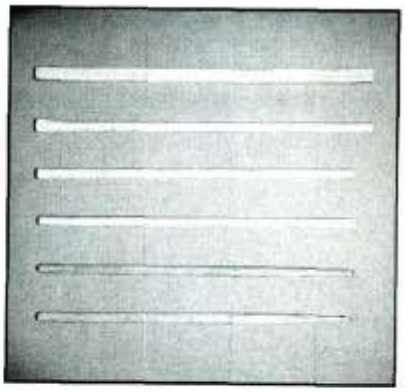
7. The butt end of each stick was rounded off.

10. Nylon tips were installed one at a time, using a manual drill press.

5. First the front, and then the back half of each stick was sanded.



8. The sticks were imprinted, one at a time, hand-held, with foil on a hot-stamp machine.



11. The progression of a hand-made drumstick: square...to round... to sanded...to round butt... to tapered neck.. .to the final drumstick shape.

6. Excess wood that had been held in the sanding chuck was cut off.

9. Every single stick was hand-lacquered with a brush.

Editor's note: Herb Brochstein is the president ofPro-Mark Corporation.

continued from page 34

doing these things, and I'd say to myself, 'Oh, heck, I don't have to go through all this here.' I could just say, 'Okay, man you got it,' and forget it."

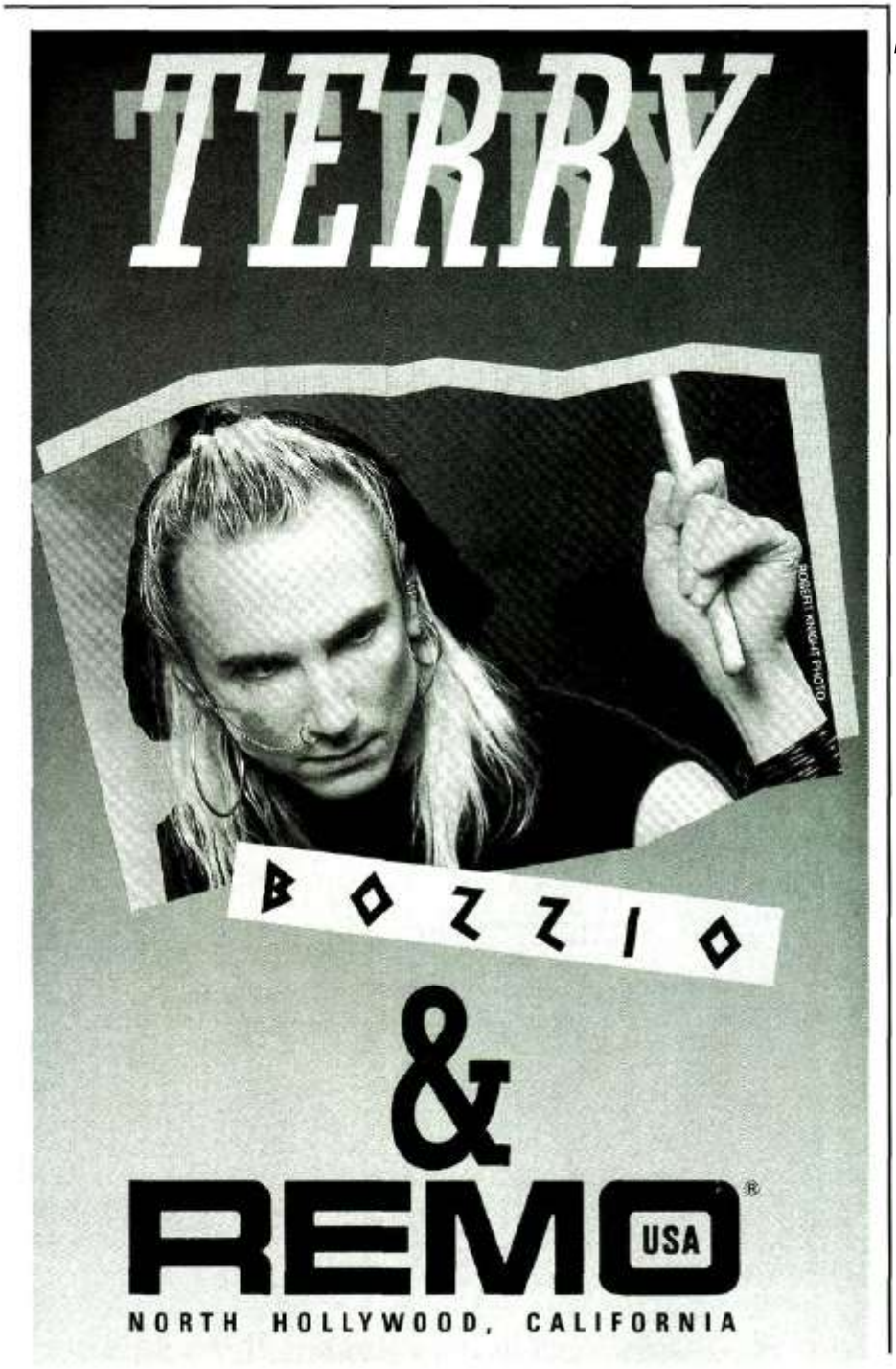
Jabo figured out his own way of dealing with JB. "Sometimes he wanted to try to keep you on edge. After he found out I didn't *get* on edge, he backed off. I knew where he was coming from. I'd laugh 'cause he couldn't stand that. During shows, you'd be playing the same thing you played the night before and that you killed them with, but tonight he says no. It was one of those moods that he'd be in. I went over to James a couple of times and said, 'Hey, man, wait a minute. If I'm not playing your show, you tell me. I'll give you my notice and leave.' 'No, no,' he'd say. 'That's not it, Mr. Starks. Everything is fine.'"

JB wasn't always so hard-headed, though. He still respected the ideas of his players. Melvin Parker: "When I came into the band, I had to learn all the old hits. James would get together the bass, guitar, and horns, and then he'd say, 'Melvin, what do you think you want to do here?' I'd work on it mentally at first, then I'd usually come up with something different from what had been previously recorded. I was successful drumming with James because I used to study the psychology of the individual. I knew when to hit a spot, how to anticipate a break by what had gone down during the day."

An unusual aspect of Brown's bands was that there were often five or six drummers at a given time. Part of the reason for this was the visual aspect—lots of drumsets on stage was quite a sight—but mostly it was because James wanted to be able to choose who would be more suited to play particular tunes at a given time. According to Melvin, "Our differences were what attracted James to all of us. Clyde Stubblefield was funky. Jabo had the jazz feeling and flavor. I was different. Prior to me, Nat Kendrick and Clayton Fillyua were all fatback. I added a little taste of New Orleans funk. I played hi-hat more than anyone at the time. Everyone used the ride cymbal and accented on the backbeat."

According to Clyde, "James might pick Jabo to play a tune because I might be putting too much of a drive into it, where Jabo was more relaxed with his playing. 'Sex Machine' was one I wanted to do, but I was driving it too much, so James said, 'Okay, let Jabo do it.' Jabo had played with Bobby 'Blue' Bland, and he had that type of feel, and that's the feeling James wanted for that song."

Though Jabo would go on to be one of the longest lasting of Brown's sidemen, early on he had to go through the same apprenticeship the other players did. "When I joined the band," Jabo recalls, "James wanted me to sit there and watch the show so I could see what was going on. As I sat down, I thought, 'Are you serious?' There were four drummers sitting there—four sets of drums. Then about three or four days later I got my drums up, and I'm thinking, 'Now there's *five* drummers here.' People would see that and think, 'How would five drummers play at the same time?' But each drummer would play a certain tune that James wanted them to play. I



don't think he could get what he wanted from just one or two drummers. Then he had one or two drummers play the up-front part of the show, and others play the rest. Sometimes in the middle of a song he'd point to, say, Clyde, and I would stop playing and Clyde would take it for a few bars. Then he'd turn around and give it right back to me."

Aside from musical concerns, James Brown took personal considerations into account when drafting new band members. "James was a good judge of character," says Melvin. "He valued morals, and cleanliness, and whether someone had good parents. He wanted to see that we had been taught the fear of God, to be a good person."

Brown was also very business-like, and expected his band members to be the same. "James was all business, and I loved that," says Jabo. "That's one reason he wanted me in the group, because I was business-like, too. I handled the band uniforms, the equipment. At one time I was in charge of transportation in the band. I bought two buses and leased his first tractor trailer, and I drove that for a while. He had a lot of trust in me.

"James had a certain way of doing things," Jabo continues. "He'd say, 'I'll tell you what to play,' and you didn't deviate from that unless he told you to, because he knew what he wanted. He paid for that. I understood that and never had a problem. A lot of people say, 'Well, he's hard.' He wasn't hard. He paid for what he wanted. 'You work for me,' he'd say, 'just like you're going to the office.' You didn't get off the bus unless you had your suit and tie on. Because you were representing his organization."

Jabo's respect for James' business-like attitude was reflected in his decision to stay on when most of the band jumped ship in 1970. "I had a contract with James, and I had to honor that contract. I'm glad I stayed now, but if I had not had a contract, I would have left, too, mainly because it was getting monotonous for me. But James was doing a lot of fining when he was off stage. The littlest thing he saw you do, he'd fine you for it. And when you forgot a part or didn't make a move you should have, he fined you for that. But it didn't bother me. I knew where he was coming from."

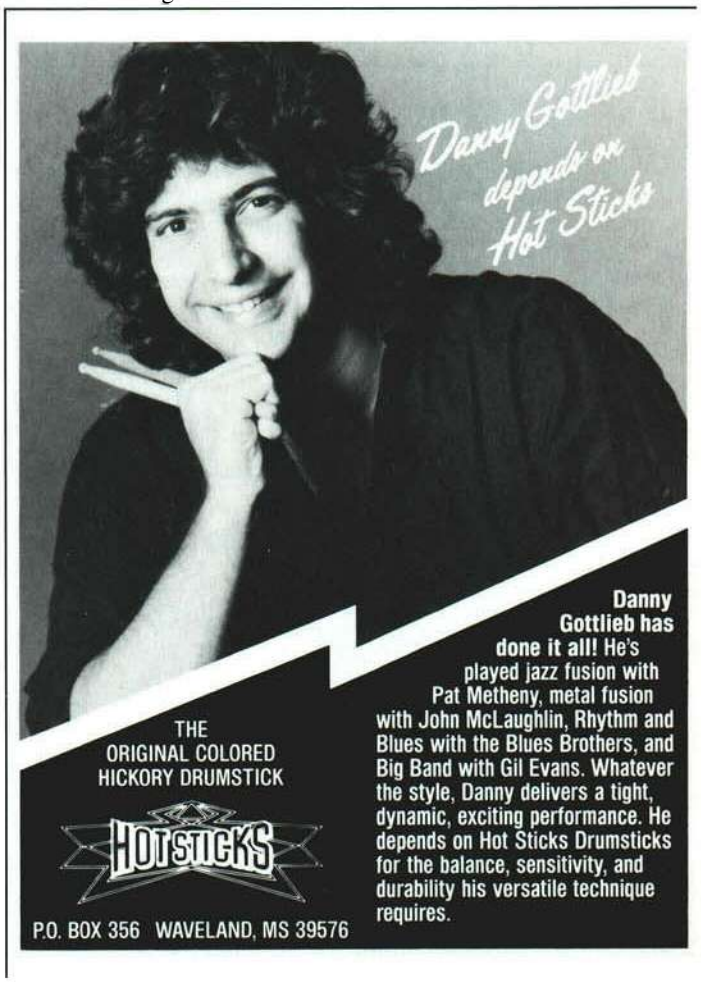
After the 1970 walkout by most of the James Brown Orchestra, JB replaced them with a young group of Cincinnati musicians previously known as the Pacesetters, featuring bassist William "Bootsy" Collins and his brother, guitarist Phelps "Catfish" Collins. This new band was dubbed the JB's, and James found that they weren't quite as willing to go along with his super-strict manner. "After Bootsy and that group joined," Jabo relates, "they changed a lot of things. James changed his ways some because they'd say, 'I ain't going for that,' and they'd walk off in the middle of a show on him."

The JB's also represented a departure in sound from their predecessors. There was a distinct change in the vibe of the rhythm section, with the guitars coming to the foreground and the horns stepping back. The immediate result was the breakthrough tune "Sex Machine," featuring the veterans Bobby Byrd and Jabo Starks with their new band mates. The song came along at the right time. Brown's music had recently been criticized for becoming too formulaic. All of a sudden, here was JB with another stylistic leap forward, and the new blood was largely responsible.

Today Jabo insists, "I could not create that thing by myself. It took that rhythm section to do it. You see, James didn't specifically lay it down that way. He basically said how he wanted it, but the bass pattern was almost like Bootsy's thing. When that band came on, those patterns changed a lot. You told Bootsy how you wanted it done, but then he did it the way he heard it. And I knew what I had to do with it to make it groove."

For those unfamiliar with the chronology of James Brown's bands (and even for those with a working knowledge of it) the timeline of the individual players can be a little confusing. Of the three drummers we're looking at here, Melvin Parker was the first to join. "I joined James' band in April 1964," Melvin recalls. "I was in college in North Carolina as a history and economics major, and I was working weekends as a drummer. I was a freshman when I met James. He wanted me for his band, so I called my dad to ask. He said, 'Stay in school,' so I did."

A year later, Melvin decided he was ready to try his hand at the band, but he still didn't plan on making a career out of it at that point. "My intention was to stay with James for a year, then go back to school and start [brother] Maceo's and my band. I was so sure that that's what was going to happen, that when James came through Greensboro again, we had everything packed to go. I saw him before his show at the Coliseum, and he was talking to a local musician about me."



Melvin laughs today about his cockiness at the time, though that self-assuredness would prove to benefit JB in more ways than one: "I introduced Maceo to James. I told James I wouldn't join unless we both did. We were both teenagers—imagine me saying that! But Maceo got in because he owned a baritone sax, and James needed one at the time. One day, I told him to take out his tenor, and to just play it while everyone was warming up. I said, 'Just do it! I want to get a look at everyone's faces when you play.' When Maceo took out his horn...everything stopped. People just stood there. He got a chance to play on stage after a large speaker fell from the ceiling of the Fox Theater in Detroit on 'Brisco' Clark. At the same time, St. Clair Pinckney, the other tenor, had a death in the family and had to leave, so Maceo got the call." Today, Maceo's wailing sax is almost as much a trademark of the JB sound as Brown's gravelly voice.

In late 1965 Melvin was drafted into the army. He was discharged in February '69 and re-joined the group. "I hadn't meant to," Melvin recalls, "but James courted me. He used to send his chartered Lear jet to meet me in Louisville [where Melvin was stationed], with a black driver to pick me up. This is a place where there were no other black people around. People were looking at me, freaking out. Then a man would step off the plane and say, 'Mr. Parker, are you ready?'"

When Melvin and Maceo left the James Brown Orchestra in 1970, they put together a tough funk outfit, Maceo & All the King's Men, which lasted for about a year and a half. (He and Maceo would also tour with P-Funk.) After going back to college to earn a teaching degree, Melvin re-joined Brown in 1975 and became band leader. He left for a final time in 1978, although he played intermittently with JB afterwards.

Today, Melvin is a school teacher, but also works as a jazz musician in the Washington, D.C. area. He occasionally gigs with Maceo's Roots Revisited band, and with ex-JB trumpeter and band leader Lewis Hamlin, who has a 22-piece big band. "I use my experiences in the classroom," says Melvin. "When the kids start talking about rap, I share my experiences in the James Brown band with them. Their mouths drop open, their eyes open up wide, and they ask lots of questions."

Clyde Stubblefield joined the James Brown Orchestra as its second-string drummer in 1965. Clyde recalls first meeting JB in a club where Clyde was jamming. Amazingly, he didn't know anything about James Brown at the time. "Brown was in the audience, and he sent someone up to tell me to come over and talk to him when I was finished playing. I finished playing, but I didn't go over. I didn't really know who he was. Then I played another song, then another, and he came over and said, 'Look! I'd like to *talk* to you.'" Clyde laughs at the memory. "So I went over and talked to him."

James invited Stubblefield to audition for his band the next day before a gig in Columbus, Georgia, an audition that would stick in Clyde's memory to this day. "I saw six sets of drums on the stage of this big coliseum, and he took me on stage with some of the band members. The place was jam-packed before show time, and he had me audition right there! I said, 'Oh, my God, all these *people.*' But it worked out."

The first hit Clyde recorded with James Brown was "Cold Sweat." Released in the summer of '67, "Cold Sweat" shot to Number 1 on the R&B charts and Number 7 on the pop charts. The song seemed to be everywhere. Significantly, the single's B-side, "Cold Sweat (Part 2)," featured Clyde taking a drum solo. Before he knew it, the drummer—as in "Give the drummer some"—was making a name for himself. Ironically, Clyde couldn't make the sessions to JB's much anticipated follow-up, "Get It Together," leaving the task to Jabo. Nevertheless, Clyde had made his mark. He would go on to be the featured drummer on such hits as "I Got The Feelin'," "Mother Popcorn," "Say It Loud—I'm Black And I'm Proud," and "I Don't Want Nobody To Give Me Nothing."

In 1969 Clyde left the group to do some sessions with Motown Records and to try to put together a band, but that didn't materialize. He re-joined Brown in June of 1970, only to leave again in 1971. Clyde then moved to Madison,

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Wisconsin, and played with Ben Sidran for about three years. He soon started a production company, Einstein Productions, and formed several bands, including a country and western outfit called Marcy & the Highlights. Today the drummer leads the nine-piece Clyde Stubblefield Band, has just finished a solo album, and recently played on a Phil Upchurch album that was recorded at Paisley Park Studios and featured Ben Sidran, Jack McDuff, and Prince drummer Michael Bland. An album featuring Clyde and several King Records alumni has been recently released, as well.

John "Jabo" Starks had the most professional experience of the three main JB drummers. He was the drummer for Bobby "Blue" Bland between 1959 and 1965, the blues giant's most successful period. Starks can be heard on such Top-10 R&B Bland hits as "I Pity The Fool," "Turn On Your Love Light," "Stormy Monday Blues," and "That's The Way Love Is." To James, acquiring Jabo was an artistic coup. "James had heard me play after Bobby's band had gotten popular," Jabo recalls. "He would send different people from his organization to wherever we were working to see if I would join his group. And I just told him no. Every time we would play the east coast, there would be someone there saying, 'Mr. Brown wants you to join the group.' 'Well, I'm happy where I am,' I'd say." This kept up for about two years, until Brown made Jabo an offer that, money-wise, he couldn't refuse.

Jabo's JB legacy extends from "Money Won't Change You" through "The Payback"—making him the only drummer to stick it out through JB's extraordinary musical changes. In 1974 he left Brown to play with B.B. King. Today Starks plays weekends with a jazz/blues group in his home town of Mobile, Alabama and works days for a company that builds steel tanks. "I wanted to get a good day gig so I could stay at home with my family and play nights," he says.

For Melvin Parker, Clyde Stubblefield, and Jabo Starks, playing with James Brown was a Catch-22 situation. While JB allowed them the opportunity to immortalize their playing, the Godfather of Soul's giant shadow still eclipsed the important contributions of all his musicians.

That's why it's sweet justice that, today, the "live-est," most grooving music ever recorded lives on amongst the hip-hop mixes in clubs across the country. The original recordings will never die, either. And the funky drummers themselves are alive and well—and still doing it to death.

We've got James Brown to thank for giving the drummers some, and the drummers to thank for giving it back to us.

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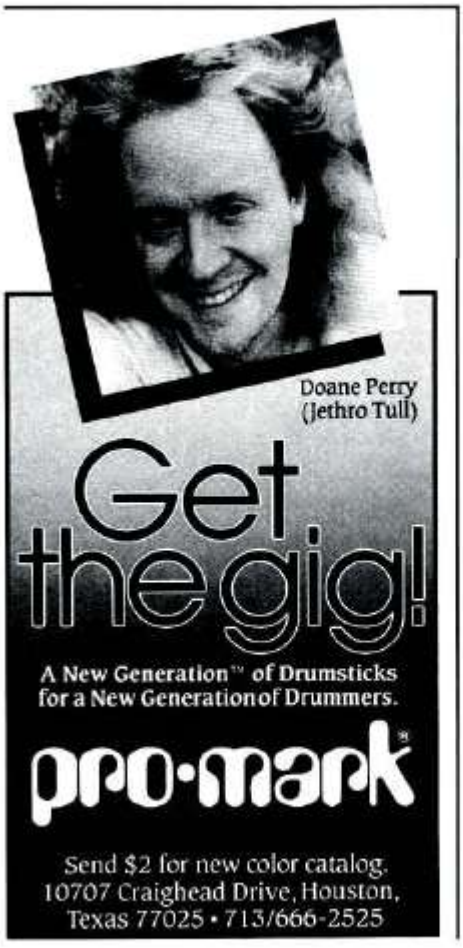
Porcaro admits that his feelings were hurt. "It wasn't because they hired Purdie," he explains. "I just figured that they wanted a better guy, and even when I did the *Katy Lied* album with them, on the tune 'Black Friday' I was the one who walked out of the studio telling them I was no good at playing shuffles and they should get a 'real guy,' which was how I always put it. They used to laugh at me for saying that, but I was only 20 years old and insecure about my drumming.

"I was just hurt ego-wise because of my infatuation with that particular band. I thought the two writers were gods. But I didn't make a stink about it. I might have been bent out of shape if it had been someone other than Purdie and I thought it wasn't grooving. But as it turned out, I probably learned more from what Bernard Purdie played on that album with that rhythm section than I've learned from any other drummer on any album. So I now consider myself fortunate that they didn't want me to play on that record.



"That's the attitude I usually have if I get replaced," Porcaro says. "In most cases it's one of my mentors or peers that I think is superior to me, and it's great because now I have another album they've done that I can learn from."

As hurt as Porcaro felt when he found out that another drummer had been hired, he didn't necessarily feel that it was the end of his career. But when Kenny Aronoff was replaced the first time he went in the studio with John Cougar Mellencamp, he thought he had blown that big break that everyone says only comes along once.

"The rest of John's band had been together for a couple of years," Kenny recalls, "but I had only been in the group for five weeks when we went in the studio to make an album. After the first day, the producer said they would have to bring in a more experienced player if they were going to get the record done on time and within budget. So John called me in and said that he would pay me for the rest of the week in LA., but that I could go on home. I was so flipped out when I heard that I wasn't going to play on the record that I refused to leave. If I couldn't play, I wanted to at least stay around and figure out why I wasn't able to play. I had never failed like that before. I had always been given at least one more chance, but they weren't going to give me another chance.

"I don't know where the words came from," Kenny says, "but there must have been an angel sitting on my shoulder speaking for me. I told John, 'I don't want to go.' He looked at me like, 'Huh?' I said, 'Look, am I still the drummer in your band?' He kind of stammered, 'Well, uh, yeah.' He was completely taken aback. So I said, 'You don't have to pay me. I'll sleep on the floor and take care of myself. But I want to stick around and watch these other drummers play. If I benefit from watching them, then you'll benefit, too, because I'm still you're drummer.' John didn't know what to say, but it seemed to make sense, so he accepted it.

"If I had gone home," Kenny says with certainty, "I'm sure he would have hired another drummer for his band."

But it was still a difficult period for Aronoff. "I was feeling very hurt and insecure, and I wasn't getting any support from anybody. I had only been in the band five weeks, so I wasn't part of the family. Everyone was looking at me like, 'You failed.' No one was trying to make me feel good; they were just making me feel worse. When the band would joke around about things, it was hard for me to joke around with them, because nothing was funny to me about anything.

"So every day I had to deal with the fact that I was on my own and no one was holding my hand. Thank God the two drummers they brought in were very nice. It was Rick Schlosser and Ed Greene. They seemed to understand what I was going through, and they were very helpful and answered all my questions.

"The whole thing was so heavy because I thought I had blown my whole career and would never have another chance. But I guess it took being stripped down to the bare bones to build myself up again. It was like I had spent my whole life building up to that point, and now, at age 27, I was having to start from the bottom again. But it was a test in life, like, 'Let's see if you can work your way back up again, and if you can, you will be stronger and better than you've ever been.'"

Now that these guys are on the other side of the fence and are often the ones doing the replacing, how do they feel about the drummers who are being pushed aside? Understandably, they are sympathetic.

"I always feel a little weird when I get called to replace someone," Aronoff says, "because I'll never forget that experience I had. Usually, I'll go up to the drummer and tell him I totally understand what's going on, and that this has happened to me, too. Usually the drummers are pretty cool, because if I've been brought in it's probably because they've already tried it with that drummer. A lot of it depends on the band. If they are making the person feel that he's still part of the family and the producer is cool, that can make a big difference."

Jim Keltner says that he's developed good rapports with a number of drummers that he has replaced. "I recently did an album with an artist whose drummer was there," Jim recalls, "and this

guy was great. First of all, he was a really good drummer with a lot of energy, but he didn't have a lot of the control you need in the studio, so there were things that would run away from him. That's just a matter of experience, and hopefully he will gain the control without losing the energy and exuberance. But that was the reason I was playing, and I explained that to him. We got along fine, and I made sure that he played tambourine or maracas on all the songs.

"I also had a good experience when I did the last Los Lobos album, *The Neighborhood,"* Keltner adds. "Their drummer, Louis, is the chief songwriter in the band, and he was one of the guys who made the decision for me to play on the album. He played on three or four of the songs, but on some of the others, he didn't feel that he could put the thing in them that he wanted to hear. And he wrote the songs, so who could argue with him? Fortunately, those songs were really fun for me to play."

Hal Blaine recalls several drummers who were perfectly happy to have him make the records. "Denny Wilson of the Beach Boys was a good example," Hal says. "He was happier spending his afternoons on the beach while I was paid $35 to play on the records. Then, at night, he could go on stage and be a big star and make $3,500."

Obviously, some drummers are not quite that willing to step aside. "I got a call to come to England for a week to do an album," Jeff Porcaro remembers, "and I was given the impression that the band didn't have a regular drummer. When I got there, not only did they have a drummer, but he was in the kitchen still arguing with the band, 'Why can't I play on my own album?'

"So that's an uncomfortable situation, where you are the 'hotshot gunslinger' who's brought in. I feel for that, because most of the time I think the drummer that I'm being used instead of is quite good for the group. Most of these drummers have pretty decent time and a pretty decent groove, otherwise they wouldn't be in the band.

"In this particular case," Porcaro continues, "after hearing demos and/or tracks they cut with that drummer, I could see why they couldn't use him. So I sat with him at dinner and hung out, and talked about 'yes, isn't it a drag, but...," and I explained to him what I thought the producer was looking for, not making it an uptight situation. And after I talked to him about what he was doing on one particular track that I thought maybe they weren't satisfied with, I managed to convince the producer and leader of the band to let him play on that song.

"The best thing I can do," Porcaro says, "is to explain to guys that they shouldn't take these situations as personal insults. I explain things I've been through with producers or artists, and their explanations of why they don't want to use a certain drummer and why they want a 'name' player. In this case, the record company had hired this producer for a reason. It was a new group, and this guy had been hired to produce these songs the best he could so that they would represent the artist the way the record company wanted that artist to be represented. Yes, they want good quality, but they also think about budget, and the producer might not have the budget to spend the extra hours—or days—to work with a band and get a great-feeling track. That's when the politics of making a record come into play and certain musicians in a particular band may be put aside for professional people to come in."

Porcaro points out that the producer is often seen as the villain in these situations, when it might really be the record company who is pulling the strings. "A lot of people do blame the producer," Jeff says, "but that's a misconception. For instance, in the situation I just described, that particular producer is one of the finest human beings in the world, and he hated having to do what he had to do. But he was hired to get a record done in a certain amount of time, and he knew the only way he could get it done was with the tools he needed.

"A good record company representative will explain to the artist or band, '"Do you want to get on the charts? Do you want a record like we sold two million of for so-and-so? Well, this is how we do it. Are you into it or not?' And if it means having to step on the toes of somebody in the band and hurt some feelings, in the overall big picture, that will be done. When the band members understand it like that, and they're not taking it as an insult to their musicianship, then I think it's a little easier to accept.

"I have to tell you," Porcaro adds, "I hear drummers bitching, and most of the time it's guys who are telling me how great they are. Aw man, I could do that gig, but this idiot hired so and so....' You know, sometimes the reason that guy wasn't used is because he has a big mouth and a bad attitude."

"Attitude is so important," Hal Blaine agrees. "It's more than just playing. It's getting along with people. If you show interest, everybody sees that. Engineers see that, and an engineer can make or break a new musician in the studio. All he has to say to the producer is, 'Those drums sound terrible. Where did they get that guy?' That makes the people in

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the booth upset. The drummer might even be good, but he has an attitude problem."

"There is another type of situation where you get replaced," Andy Newmark points out, "and it's not because of not being able to cut it. As the years went on and we got more into the overdub thing, a lot of times you would cut a track that would sound fine when you did it. But with recording, you never really know what you've got until you hear it a day or two later in the cold light of day. And then maybe it just doesn't feel the way you thought it did.

"Often the original drummer comes back to redo the track. But maybe he isn't available, and someone else is. I remember a Randy Newman record where Jim Keltner had done a couple of tracks, and then he went on to another project and I came in to do some tracks. While I was there, they listened to one of Jim's tracks with fresh ears, and decided the drums weren't quite what they wanted. Rather than book Jim to come back, it was like, 'Let's try it with Andy because he's here anyhow, we've got a couple of hours left, and we've already paid him.' It had nothing to do with Jim not cutting it.

"There are also stylistic reasons," Newmark adds. "They might want me for a couple of tracks that have a heavy backbeat, but want to bring in Jim for something that's more artsy. And it's funny, because different people will have a different take on you. Somebody who's only heard me on a Carly Simon record might hire me for the folk-y tracks, but when it comes to something harder, they figure it's not my bag. Meanwhile, someone else heard me on the Ron Wood album with Keith Richards and Willie Weeks, and they figure I'm only good for the groove-oriented rock stuff, and they'll want to hire Kunkel for the more sensitive tunes."

Some artists will cut the same track several times with different players, just to get different feels. Obviously, only one will ultimately end up on the album. "If they recut it with just a different drummer," laughs Kenny Aronoff, "that's the worst. But if they use an entirely different rhythm section, you realize that they wanted a whole different feel."

"As a studio musician," Newmark says, "you constantly get nixed off things that you wish you could finish. You cut a couple of songs with an artist, and you're just starting to get your teeth into it, and you're hoping you'll do the whole record. But then they come in and say, 'Okay, that's it. You can pack up now. We've got a couple of other guys booked for the other tracks.' But that's part of the turf when you're a free-lance player."

"Sometimes I'll get a call from an artist," Porcaro says, "who tells me that he wants me on his next album. Then I hear that he's in the studio with another drummer. All I can do is figure that there was a reason he couldn't use me this time. In a case like that, don't waste more than 20 seconds of your life worrying about it. Move on to the next thing. Or take out the pads and start practicing. Use it as inspiration. Get pissed off, but get pissed off about striving to be better."

But some players never accept being replaced. "I was called in to record with this band for two days," Jim Keltner says. "The demos were real crude, but the songs were cool. So I went in and did the first day, and that night the guitar player told me that the drummer was real angry and didn't want to come to the session. I felt bad for him, and so I told the guitar player the whole story about how I had been replaced by Jim Gordon. I told him to tell their drummer that story, and to tell him that he was certainly welcome at the session and he should come by. I would be happy to share whatever I could with him.

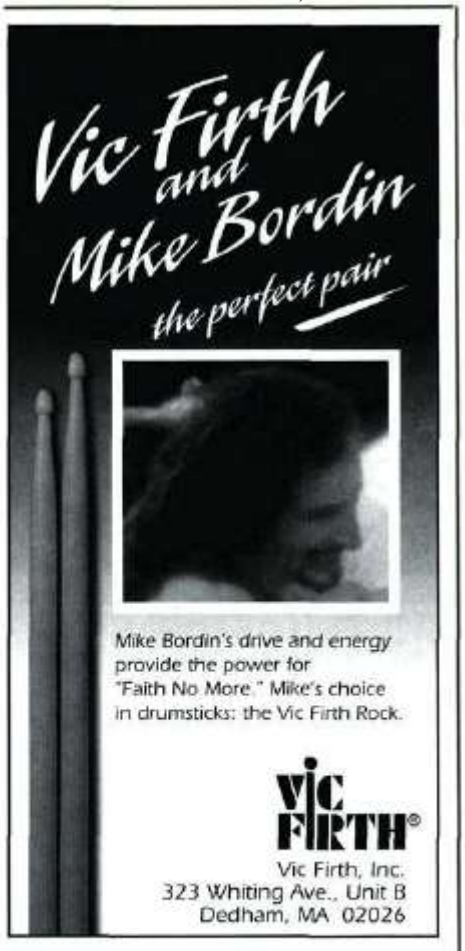
"He never came, though," Jim says, shaking his head sadly. "I always thought that was to his detriment. It just wasn't in the right spirit. I mean, to each his own, but I feel you should never pass up any kind of learning experience. I don't think you will if you really have music in your heart, but maybe some people don't. The music should win out in the end.

"Look at Jeffrey," Keltner says. "When Purdie replaced him on *The Royal Scam,* he didn't hold a grudge or focus on the rejection or any of that. He went right to the music. When he got that album, he *studied* the sucker. And I can tell you that to this day Jeff is a huge Bernard Purdie fan.

"And look at Kenny Aronoff. This guy had to humiliate himself. The band was all thinking, 'Why doesn't this guy go home? Doesn't he know that he's not wanted?' But Kenny hung in there. That's how badly he wanted it.

"I can only say that you've got to hang," Keltner says. "If you love this thing enough to stick with it, then it will happen for you. You will end up playing on somebody's record at some point. But if you're not willing to hang in there, then you probably shouldn't be playing the drums anyway."

Perhaps Hal Blaine sums it up best. "There are no losers," he says. "Only winners who give up too soon."



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Highlights Of PASIC 91
Anaheim, CA
November 20 - 23

This past winter's Percussive Arts Society International Convention was a rousing success, both in the wide selection of artists performing and in the number of drummers and percussionists in attendance. Over 2,900 drum and percussion enthusiasts enjoyed great clinics and performances, and the exhibit area was reported to have the greatest number of exhibitors in the history of the convention. There certainly was a lot to see and do this past November.

As usual, the four-day event covered many different aspects of the percussion field, from legit percussion to drumset. Of special note for drummers were the finals of the PAS's drumset contest. The competition was open to the public, and the talented contestants certainly showed that there are some great young players out there. Each had to perform with a rhythm section in different styles, read charts, and solo. A host of celebrity judges were on hand for the event, including composer Lalo Schifrin and drummers Ed Soph, Jeff Hamilton, Harvey Mason, and Gregg Bissonette. Our congratulations to all the finalists, including the winner of the competition, Ronnie Manaog.

Modern Drummer was again proud to sponsor the drumset master classes this year, which brought some well-known players together with drummers in a classroom setting. Our thanks to the artists who contributed to the event. Here are some of the highlights of the show.

Photo by Lissa Wales

Chad Wackerman performed in clinic, discussing a topic he is adept at: odd meters. Chad also played to a tape of songs from his recent solo album, Forty Reasons.

Photo by Lissa Wales

Gregg Bissonette turned a performance with a band into a clinic by analyzing the chart to each tune they were playing. Gregg's playing was inspired.

Photo by Lissa Wales

Joey Heredia performed with his trio, Jazz Funk a la GoGo. The band jammed on some old Weather Report covers that Heredia burned on.

Photo by Lissa Wales

The eloquent **Ed Thigpen** gave a clinic on alternative sounds at the drumkit. Mr. Thigpen used sticks, brushes, mallets, and his voice to explore different sounds on the kit.

Photo by Lissa Wales

Chester Thompson played an opening solo that effectively set up the topic for his clinic—playing all styles convincingly.

Photo by Lissa Wales

Ralph Humphrey gave an educational master class on analyzing and phrasing rhythms. By using odd combinations of note groupings, Ralph gave pointers on how to phrase in a more interesting way.

Photo by Rick Mattingly

Ed Shaughnessy (right), put on a master class that gave everyone in attendance something to think about. By working with several drummers, Ed gave practical tips on playing different styles of music—a very educational experience.

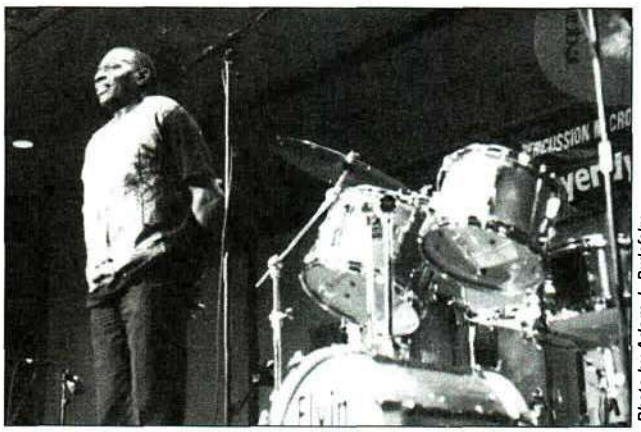

Photo by Adam J. Budofsky

The legendary Elvin Jones made a rare clinic performance. The SRO crowd met Elvin with a standing ovation, and many of L.A.'s finest drummers were on hand to acknowledge this master. Elvin gave a thoughtful and insightful speech, answered questions, and eventually made it to the drums to demonstrate his totally inimitable approach.

Several other excellent clinics and master classes were given by such artists as Terry Bozzio, Peter Donald, Clayton Cameron, David Garibaldi, Casey Scheuerell, and Greg D'Angelo. Ending the convention on a high note was the performance of Louie Bellson and his big band at the final evening concert. Our congratulations to PASIC '91 host Dave Black for putting together a great program.

Pearl Acquires Interest In Remo, Inc.

Remo, Inc. has announced that Mitsuo Yanasagawa, a principal owner of Pearl Drum Co., is buying a minority interest in Remo, Inc. as part of a cooperative effort by the two companies. Initially, Pearl will provide technical assistance to advance the development of hardware and other percussion products at Remo's Guadalajara, Mexico facility. "We believe the industry and Remo, Inc. will benefit greatly from Pearl's expertise in product design and manufacturing," stated Remo, Inc. president Remo Belli.

Coming Events

Las Vegas Music Expo, March 21 - 22, Sands Expo & Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV (Consumer Music Show)

Second Annual Percussion Ensemble Festival, April 5, Ridgewood High School, Ridgewood, NJ. (Competition and Master Classes. Contact Gary Fink, Ridgewood H.S. Music Dept., 627 E. Ridgewood Ave., Ridgewood, NJ 07451.)

Ohio Music Industry Expo, May 2 - 3 , International Expo Center, Cleveland, OH. (Consumer Music Show. Contact North Coast Trade Shows, Inc., P.O. Box 29653, Parma, OH 44129, [2161 267-2942.)

New From Yamaha

Yamaha has introduced five new snare drum models. Two *Dave Weckl* Signature models (5x13 and 5x14 sizes) feature maple shells and dual snare systems that can be used together or separately. The 7x13 *Akira Jimbo* Signature snare drum features an all-maple shell and stainless steel snares. Yamaha's 25th Anniversary limited-edition snare drum has a maple and spruce shell. And their 7-ply, all-maple *MSD-0115* drum features a very thin synthetic resin coating that the company claims allows for longer sustain.

Also new from Yamaha are their *Power V Special* drumkit—which features mohagany shells with poplar inner plies—and a completely redesigned *800* series hardware line. The *800* series was designed to be heavy-duty but "classy"-looking, with art deco wing-nuts and increased gear positions in its cymbal tilters.

In addition, Yamaha has introduced its 3 1/2-*octave Acoustalon* mallet keyboard, made from fiberglass reinforced plastic, their *Studio 5B* series of drumsticks, and *Tour Master* drumset cases. **Yamaha Corporation of America, Band & Orchestral Division, 3445 East Paris Ave, SE, P.O. Box 899, Grand Rapids, MI 49512-0899, (616) 940-4900.**

DW Pro-Cushion

Drum Workshop's *Pro-Cushion* bass drum muffling system is an "I"-shaped pad that muffles only a portion of bass drum heads while still allowing the heads and shell to vibrate, according to the company. The pad is secured in place with elastic bands and loops, is adjustable and removable, and comes as both standard equipment on all DW bass drums and as a separate accessory item. **Drum Workshop, Inc., 2697 Lavery Court, Unit #16, Newbury Park, CA 91320, tel: (805) 499-6863, fax: (805) 498-7392.**

Meinl Mini-Percussion

Meinl is now offering miniature fiberglass bongos and conga drums. Originally intended as novelty or "toy" items, the drums have proven popular with professional touring percussionists. They provide a high-pitched sound well above the

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Remo Additions

Remo has introduced a new composite drum shell material, *the Acousticon 516,* which is formed of thick plies of wood fibers and resins. Remo states the new shells are denser, harder, and stronger than the original *Acousticon* shells. The *516* shells will be used on all of Remo's top-line drums, with a thinner version, the 250, used on their lighter-weight percussion products.

Also new from Remo are their Signature Series lines of frame drums, hoop drums, tambourines, tars, bombos, pow wow drums, surdos, and bongos, featuring graphics of Glen Velez, Mickey Hart, and the Grateful Dead.

Remo has also expanded its *Legato* line of snare drums with a lower-priced pipe drum, the *Series 100,* plus the *Series 200* (which replaces their *Legato* corps-style snare drum and no longer comes with top snares) and the *Series 300,* which replaces their original *Legato* pipe-style snare and comes with wire snares top and bottom. **Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer Street, North Hollywood, CA 91605.**

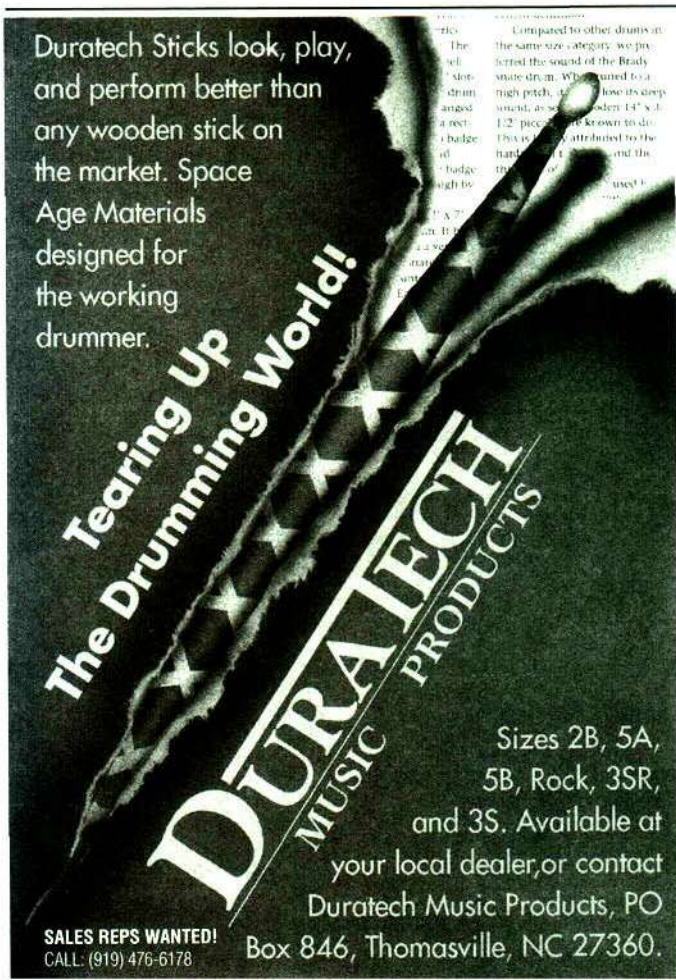
Premier APK Kit And Headsets

Premier's new *APK Fusion* kit features 10x10 and 10x12 toms, a 12x14 hanging "floor" tom, a 6 1/2 xl4 snare drum, and a 16x20 bass drum. Premier says the *APK Fusion* kit is appropriate for players who can't get the proper sounds from standard five-piece kits.

Premier has also introduced *Headset* replacement drum head packages. Models include the *CL Extra* batter and bottom sets, and *PD* and *DS* batter sets. The sets include 12", 13", and 16" tom heads, plus 14" snare heads, which Premier states are included at no charge. **Premier Percussion, USA, Inc., 1263 Glen Ave., Suite 250, Moorestown, NJ 08057.**

Expanded Ludwig Black Beauty Line

Ludwig's newest *Black Beauty* snare drum model is made with a hammered one-piece bronze shell. It comes in 5x14 and 6 1/2xl4 sizes, and can be ordered with either *P-85 Supra-Phonic* or *P- 70 Super-Sensitive* snare strainers. A 3x13 piccolo model is also available. **Ludwig Industries, P.O. Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515, (219) 522-1675.**



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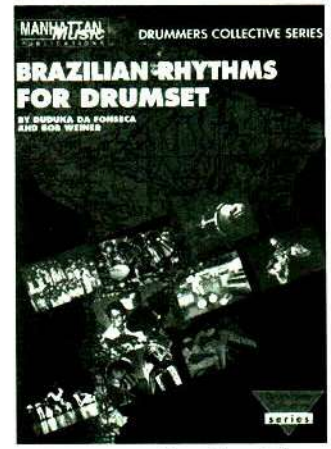

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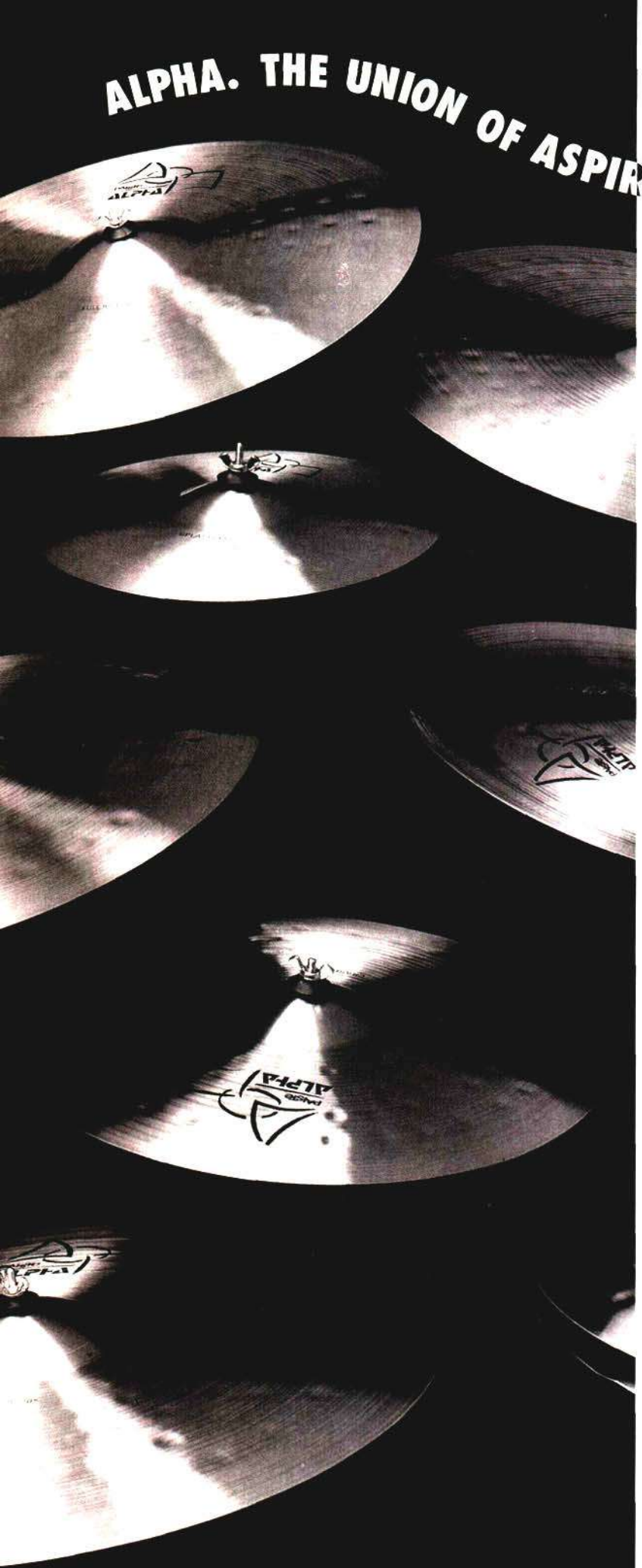

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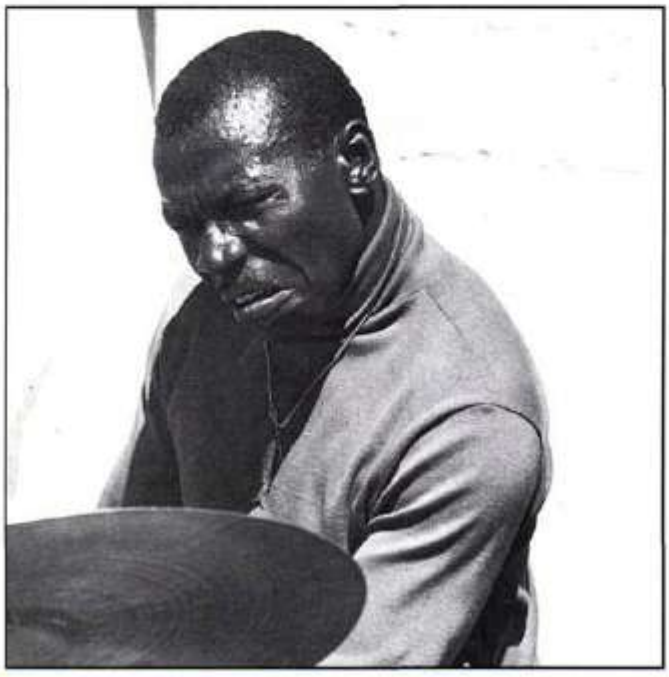

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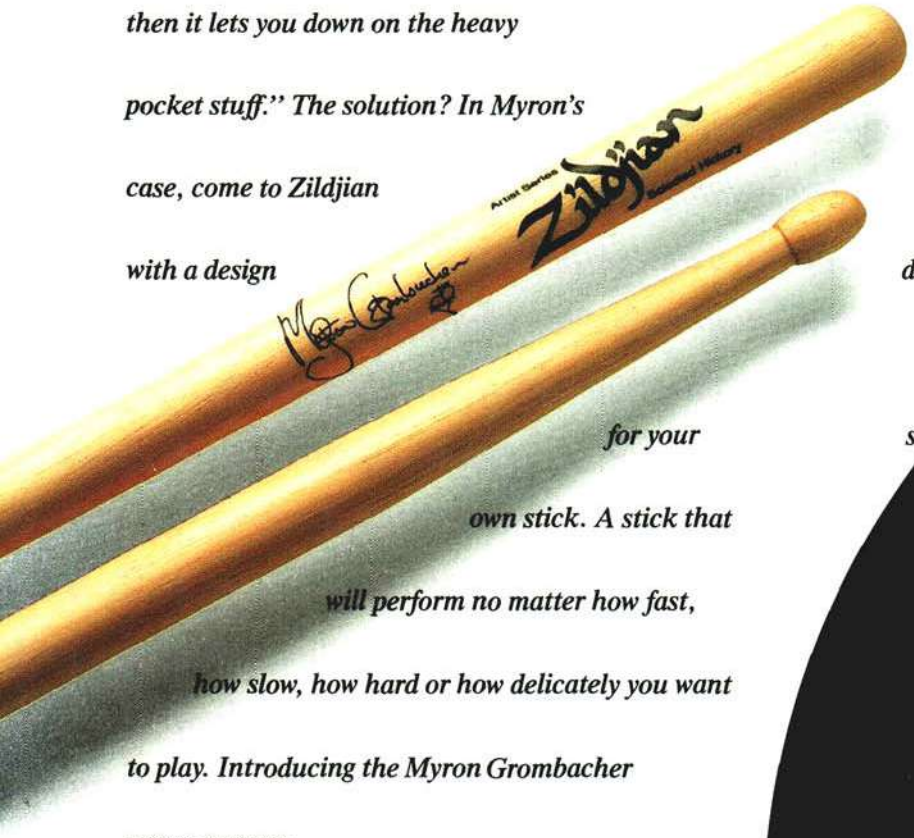

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